

Isaiah 17:1 - May 20, 2021
A Prophecy Against Damascus
JD Farag

All right, good evening, and welcome to our midweek Bible study on Thursday nights. We're going through the Bible book-by-book and chapter-by-chapter and verse-by-verse. We're in the book of Isaiah, and I'm really looking forward to Isaiah Chapter 17 tonight. I think you know why, so we're going to get right to it. If you don't mind, we'll begin with a word of prayer. If you would, please join me.

Loving heavenly Father, we're just so ever grateful to You for Your Word and for this time that we have in the middle of a week, on Thursday night. Where we can come to this place and put aside all the stress and pressure and busyness of our lives and give You our undivided attention, open up our ears to You, our hearts to You. Allow You, Lord, and not just allow You, but we yearn for You to speak into our lives and minister to us as only You can in and through Your Word. Lord, we have before us tonight a very interesting chapter here in our Bibles. We really need for the Holy Spirit to be our teacher and our guide as we navigate our way through it. Lord, we want to mind the riches here in the text before us tonight. So, will You bless our time together, we pray? We ask You for this in Jesus' name. Amen and amen.

All right, so here we are in Isaiah 17, long-awaited chapter. We now come to what I would argue is among the most intriguing prophecies in the Bible concerning Damascus, Syria. Once again, we have another dual prophecy, as it were, in the sense that it would be fulfilled in that day, as well as ultimately fulfilled yet future in the last days. And we are certainly in those last days.

By the way, when we get to chapter 19, it is a prophecy concerning Egypt. It is another dual prophecy very interesting, especially at the end of the chapter, for those of you who like to read ahead to stay ahead, in for a tremendous blessing when we get to Chapter 19.

By the way, oh, I'm so glad I remembered before I forget. Next week, Pastor Mac is filling in for me, so we're not going to be in Isaiah. We'll resume the following week, whatever that date is. I think next week's the 27th, which would make sense since today is the 20th. I've always been good with math. But anyway, the following, and I think it's going to be our Communion Service as well the following Thursday. The first Thursday of each month, we partake together at the Lord's table.

Anyway, when we get to Isaiah 19, we're going to see another one of these dual prophecies. As we go through this chapter, what I want us to do tonight is glean from its prophetic significance. But perhaps more importantly, especially for anyone who's really struggling right now, I would like for us to also glean from it its application personally to our lives. And there's so much here in this chapter in that regard.

Let's jump in verse 1. Here it is, "The burden against Damascus (or "The prophecy concerning Damascus."). Behold, Damascus will cease from being a city, and it will be a ruinous heap."

Right out of the chute, first verse, we have this specificity concerning Damascus, and the prophecy is that it will cease from being a city. It's for this and other reasons. We're going to see another one towards the end of the chapter that students and teachers of Bible prophecy, present company included, believe that this is a yet future prophecy that will ultimately be fulfilled by virtue of the fact that Damascus is still a modern-day city. It has not yet ceased being a city.

One need look no further than to a map. I'd like to draw your attention to this one. I want to point out the strategic and prophetic significance of the modern-day city of Damascus, Syria. Let's start with what's pictured on the left. These are the actual borders of the Promised Land that were given to Israel, recorded in Genesis Chapters 11, 12, and 15. It includes in part or whole the modern-day countries of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, and Syria.

I didn't have time to; I probably should have. I should have outlined where the boundaries are of what Israel is today. Actually, I would have had to blow up the picture because it's so small; it's just a little sliver. That is the original Promised Land.

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You'll notice its resemblance to the picture on the right. This is a picture of the map of what is known as the Levant. What is the Levant? I'm so glad you asked. You asked, right? I'm going to tell you anyway. So, you might remember that there was this acronym or reference to ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS. There was also a reference to ISIS as ISIL by then-President Barack Obama, who I believe by design deliberately referred to the Islamic State. He would never call them the Islamic State. And that's the problem I always had with the acronym because ISIS, ISIL, no, what is it? The Islamic State.

I'm just thinking of it now, you'll forgive me, but there was one quote back at the time when then-President Barack Obama said that the Islamic State is neither Islamic nor a state. I thought, wait, what? No, they call themselves the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, and the greater Syria is the area known as the Levant. So whenever they were referenced as ISIL, it was a reference to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Promised Land.

There is no coincidence here. I mean, you could superimpose a map of the Levant over the original borders of the Promised Land, and it is what they refer to as the Levant. Why do I point this out? Because this is the "why" behind the "what" of this prophecy.

It's also the "why" behind the "what" we see happening today in Israel, against Israel, with Israel. The enemies of Israel don't want peace with Israel. They want the destruction of Israel. They do not recognize Israel. It is not Israel; it is greater Syria; it is the Levant. This is why we have the enemies of Israel today...

By the way, the breaking news you probably heard, we'll see, but there was an agreement, an approval for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, which means absolutely nothing. We're actually going to talk about that on Sunday in our Prophecy Update, but you have to understand...

I wish I had another -- Actually, I do, maybe I'll wait, that's a good idea. How about I don't get ahead of myself? I have another map. I forgot, so glad I brought it. I want to point out what's happening with Gaza, with Hamas, which has really overtaken the so-called Palestinians.

As you know, there's no such thing as a Palestinian. They're Arab people. These are Muslims; they are enemies of Israel, and again, they do not want peace with Israel. They do not want a state with Israel. This two-state solution is a lie from the pit of hell. I call it and refer to it as yet another "final solution" because peace for them, the Arab, means the destruction of Israel.

This is actually Islam, by the way. It started with Mohammed and then after him Saladin. They would make peace with their enemy and then destroy them. This is textbook, and it's right out of their playbook, and it's right out of the playbook of the enemy himself.

This is what's happening so you've got -- I'm getting ahead of myself again. I probably should have brought that map up sooner. But let's look at verse 2. Hang in there with me. You're going to have to bear with me. I'll have you out of here tonight at about midnight. I hope you brought your pajamas and toothpaste.

"The cities of Aroer are forsaken. They will be for flocks which lie down, and no one will make them afraid. The fortress also will cease from Ephraim, the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria. They will be as the glory of the children of Israel, says the Lord of hosts. In that day (verse 4), it shall come to pass that the glory of Jacob will wane, and the fatness of his flesh grows lean. It shall be (verse 5) as when the harvester gathers the grain and reaps the heads with his arm. It shall be as he who gathers heads of grain in the Valley of Rephaim."

What is this about? Well, as was the case at that time, northern Israel will be impacted when this is ultimately fulfilled. Now I get to show you my other map. I'll spend just a little bit of time on this so you can get a visual. We know this northern area today as the strategic Golan Heights. Israel

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miraculously recaptured this part north from Syria, and when I say miraculous, that's not hyperbole. It was a miraculous recapturing of that which belongs to them anyway.

By the way, when you try to Google this, it autocorrects. It doesn't let you say "recapture." Try this. It corrects it - "captures." No, no, "recaptures." That changes the whole complexion of it. They took it back; it was theirs, to begin with. They didn't take it from; they took it back. Oh, but they are the occupiers. No! Actually, you are the occupiers. I'm sorry, emphasis added. These are my people.

Do you know what's sad, in all seriousness? It's that they are so deceived. Please, and I know we talked about this on Sunday, pray for the Arab people in Gaza and the West Bank and the Middle East. Pray for the Jewish people.

I hope you don't tire of me saying this, but maybe this is as good a time as any to say it again. I think it's just so apropos to be reminded, and I know for me, it's a much-needed reminder. I have to look at people not as Arab or Jew, Left or Right, Black or White, Conservative or Liberal, Republican or Democrat. No, either lost or saved.

That's the bottom line because our enemy is not people. The enemy is the enemy. They're not "they're the bad guys, and they're the good guys." No, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, brothers and sisters. We wrestle not against our fellow man. We wrestle against these demonic entities in the spiritual realm, wickedness in high places. That's where the battle is. It is a spiritual battle.

Now for those of you that have been to Israel with us over the years, you'll remember this area very well. In fact, one year when we were there, we actually heard bombs when we were north, in northern Israel, in the Golan Heights. When we were north, in northern Israel, in the Golan Heights. One year, in fact, I think it was the last time we were there. Actually, it was when we were getting ready to go to Masada, we actually saw fighter jets fly right over us on their way back from Syria, where they had launched airstrikes overnight.

Anyway, I want to point out just really quick, and if the guys don't mind, maybe putting it back online for the online viewer. Look at Gaza, how small it is, right? That is Hamas, the West Bank. In Syria, you don't see it there, but Lebanon is to the left of Syria, my birthplace of Lebanon. That's Hezbollah, and Hezbollah is Iranian-backed. The common denominator with Hamas and Hezbollah and et al., all of the above is that their sole goal is the elimination, the termination of Israel.

From the north, from this area in the north, subsequent to the fulfillment of this Isaiah 17 prophecy in all of its specificity comes Russia, Iran, and Turkey. Just two weeks ago, maybe a week ago, Erdogan was reported to have told Putin in Russia -- Erdogan=Turkey / Putin=Russia -- something to the effect of we're going to have to go in and put pressure on. There was a threat actually made to Israel to basically stop defending themselves, which is what it boils down to.

Now that's key; that's very significant. In Matthew 24, when Jesus answered the disciples' questions about what is going to be the sign of Your returning, of the end of the age, He made a very interesting comment. He said, "There are going to be wars and threats of wars," "rumors of wars," as it's translated in some of your translations. There is going to be this invasion from the north subsequent to, I believe, the fulfillment of Isaiah 17 from the Golan in the north and even now at the ready in Syria.

Even as recent as two years ago, I could not stand behind this pulpit and say what I'm about to say. But in Syria today, at the ready, you will find all of the Ezekiel 38 nations at the ready to invade Israel from the north. Isn't it interesting?

Again, we're going to talk a little bit about this on Sunday. There is this one verse in Ezekiel 38; it's verse 13. We talk about it often where there's this reference to Sheba and Dedan and Tarshish and

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the young lions thereof merely protesting this Russia, Iran, Turkey-led alliance of nations invading Israel. They question it, they protest it, and they ask, "Are you coming to take a spoil?" That's all they do.

Isn't it interesting that Sheba and Dedan is the modern-day area we know today as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, who are right on schedule exactly as God's Word said it would be? Well, they have a peace agreement now with Israel. Isn't that interesting.

Here's another thing even more notable in some ways than the nations listed in Ezekiel 38 by their ancient name: the nations conspicuously absent from this allied invasion. One of them is Iraq, another Egypt, another Jordan. And how about this? Syria is not mentioned.

It's for that reason that I believe personally that the Isaiah 17 prophecy has to be fulfilled concerning Damascus, and as we're going to see here towards the end, it's going to happen so fast. Once it does, they move in and invade Israel from the north, through the Golan, from Syria, where they're already at the ready to invade. Everything is set up perfectly, and I mean perfectly.

I want to recommend this documentary series, "Against All Odds: Israel Survives." I think it came out in 2006. It's been a couple of years now since I watched it. I want to watch it again. It's available on Amazon Prime. In it, they showed just how miraculous Israel's survival has been from 1948 to the present.

I bring this up because when the Ezekiel 38 prophecy is fulfilled, which... I get asked this all the time, and I am not dogmatic about it, but I am of the belief that the Ezekiel 38 prophecy happens after the rapture, so we're not going to be here to see it. I don't know; it's very possible that it could happen. But when it does happen, it is going to be another against all odds, miraculously God, because there's no nation standing with Israel.

That's another thing we're going to talk about on Sunday in Zechariah: All the nations are gathered against her. You know what that means, don't you? America is not standing with Israel in that day when all the nations are gathered against her. So you're going to have this alliance: Russia, Iran, Turkey, and all of these nations are going to come against little Israel. God is going to intervene on behalf of his people, the Jewish people, with whom He has an everlasting covenant. Do you know what an everlasting covenant is? I know this is deeply profound. It's everlasting.

By the way, can we just address the elephant in the proverbial room, if you don't mind? God is not through with the Jews, and neither do we want God to be through with the Jews. Do you want to know why? Because God has a covenant with the Jews, and so too does He have a covenant with me and you. If God is through with the Jews, then how secure are you? That is not in my notes, so there! And that's an Arab telling you that.

Do you know what's really sad? I mean, we are living in a day now where anti-Semitism, Replacement Theology, where the church replaces the Jews -- by the way, those who have bought that lie that the church replaces the Jew as God's elect -- do you know what you just did? You just put the church in the tribulation because the purpose of the tribulation is for the salvation of the Jewish nation, right?

You see, we're already saved. Why do we need to go through the tribulation? Why do we have to be appointed to the wrath of God? Because you see, God is going to pour out His wrath on a Christ-rejecting world, and it's going to be that which brings Israel to a true saving knowledge of their true messiah: the tribulation. That's why. That's the "why" behind the "what."

Again, God has a covenant with the Jews. God is not through with the Jews, and we don't want Him to be through with the Jews, right? "The God of Israel never slumbers nor sleeps." I think it's in Jeremiah. I just think of the poetic majesty of it all. The prophet declares that if there ever comes, a

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day when that sun doesn't shine in the sky or the stars at night no longer exist, if that happens, then Israel will cease to exist.

But that's not going to happen. Translated: Israel is going to exist, and God is going to intervene. I love it at the end of Ezekiel 38, where God says, watch Me now -- that's a very loose translation and paraphrase. But it's basically: Watch what I'm going to do. It's not just that God is going to do it; it's the way God is going to do it and why God is going to do it. God's going to do it in such a way so that they will know that He is God.

After this decimation and devastation, and it's going to happen very fast. Some believe, again, present company included, that this Ezekiel 38 prophecy is going to be in the span of maybe about 24 hours. It is going to be a devastating and decisive defeat of all of these nations that come against Israel, and God is going to defeat them. No nation is standing with Israel by God's design, so no one can receive any glory for that which God alone has done. It's going to be another miracle.

Anyway, back to this documentary, one of my favorite episodes, and I don't remember which one it was, but they recount the miracle at Golan. During the night, Israeli soldiers were caught in the middle of a field riddled with landmines. They couldn't turn back, nor could they go forward because it would be certain death, so they started poking around. They were going to crawl and take their chances. Then God sends this mighty wind, and it clears the entire surface and exposes every single one of those land mines in an instant, and they crossed miraculously to their safety. Is that chicken skin or what? The miracles of what God does for His people.

Well, there's a personal application here too. Think this through with me. Doesn't God do that in our lives? The Holy Spirit. The mighty wind of the Holy Spirit exposing the landmines that could be so perilous as He guides us in the way that He would have us to go - This is the way, walk ye in it. God does miracles like that in our lives as we navigate our way through the land mines of life. And if you're anything like me, and I suspect that you are, I've got a few landmines in front of me. It's like, Lord, I don't know what to do here. I can't go that way because you know...

I think about the Israelites after the Exodus. One of my favorites, along with all my other favorite accounts of a miracle that God does, as only He can, when the Israelites flee Egypt after that 10th plague, and they come to the Red Sea. I mean, it starts there were there not enough graves in Egypt, God had to bring us out here to kill us? Moses is like, what are we going to do? And here's the Egyptians behind us and the Red Sea in front of us. It looks like if I go that way, I'm a dead duck with a capital dead and a capital duck. And if I go forward, I'm a capital dead, capital duck too.

And then God says, watch Me now. He has Moses take his rod; he parts the Red Sea. The Israelites: If I'm one of the Israelites there, I'm thinking to myself, I think we should go this way. You think! ...They walk on dry ground, and they get to the other side. And then here come the Egyptians who have been held back by a pillar of fire. Oh, no, you don't! And it wasn't until the Israelites had made it safely to the other side that the fire ceased, the Egyptians pursued, and then God just closes the Red Sea.

You would think that would have settled it right there and right then. I will never doubt You again, God. You blew the soil and the sand off of all of these landmines miraculously. You parted the Red Sea for me miraculously. You would think I would never doubt again. Do you know how long it took the Israelites? And hey, don't be too hard on them because you would have done the same thing.

We always show ourselves in a favorable light, don't we? When we're reading the Old Testament, we're so quick to say, man, those Israelites, a bunch of complainers and murmurs. Oh really? Oh, like you wouldn't have been complaining if you were there.

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Do you know how many days it took? I counted like three days, and they're already complaining again after the Red Sea. Are you kidding me? God does this miracle, and God does miracles; he's a God of miracles. He can do anything.

Back to our Bible study already in progress, verse 6. How are we doing, everybody okay? "Yet gleaning grapes will be left in it, like the shaking of an olive tree, two or three olives at the top of the uppermost thicket, four or five in its most fruitful branches," says the Lord God of Israel. "In that day, (Notice the repeated in that day) a man (this is interesting) will look to his Maker, and his eyes will have respect for the Holy One of Israel. He will not look to the altars, the work of his hands. He will not respect what his fingers have made nor the wooden images, nor the incense altars. In that day, his strong cities will be as a forsaken forest. And an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel. And there will be desolation."

Okay, stay with me on this. Here's another very powerful and, I believe a personal application to us in our lives because this speaks to the purpose of this prophecy and, more importantly, as it relates to the judgment of the Lord in turning people to the Lord, back to the Lord. Sometimes this is what it takes.

Notice that they will not look to their idols, their false gods, their wooden images, and those things they made. They made graven images for themselves, bowed down, and worshiped them. No longer will they look to them. Why? Because when it happens, when the judgment comes, those gods are no gods at all.

I think about repeatedly and replete throughout the Old Testament; God would command Moses to have Aaron speak to the people. I am the Lord your God that led you out of Egypt, delivered you from Egypt, the emphasis being on "I" am the Lord your God. That's not your God.

I think about when Moses had seemingly taken too long coming down from Mount Sinai after receiving the law, and the Israelites grew very impatient and pressured Aaron, Moses' older brother, and he makes this golden calf. Where do you think he got that idea? He got that from Egypt. They have so many gods. In fact, do you know the plagues that every single one of those plagues was a demonstration of Almighty God against one of Egypt's gods? Some estimate over 3,000 gods.

They worshiped the Nile as God. God says, okay, I'm going to turn it to blood; how about that? Get this: They worshipped frogs, not Farags, frogs. God says, you like frogs, do you? Have some frogs. Every single one of those plagues was a smack in the face of these false gods of the Egyptians. And it was God's demonstrating that He is God. He is God. And sometimes it does take that, doesn't it? It takes a plague; it takes adversity; it takes a trial. It takes the heavy hand of the Lord on our lives to get our attention.

We're going to see that again here in a moment. In verse 10, "Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation (This is the reason) and have not been mindful of the Rock of your stronghold. Therefore, you will plant pleasant plants and set out foreign seedlings. In the day, you will make your plant to grow, and in the morning, you will make your seed to flourish. But the harvest will be a heap of ruins in the day of grief and desperate sorrow."

Do you see where this is going? The lesson here, the takeaway here is that oftentimes, God will deem it fit to bring all of our hard work to nothing in order to get our attention. We're actually going to see this in our study. We're going to start in Hebrews on Sunday, Lord willing, chapter 1. I mean, it doesn't get any better than this. On Thursday nights, we're in the book of Isaiah, and on Sunday mornings, we're the book of Hebrews. Come on, the Lord can come back now, but we're going to see this. I

t's very interesting and easily missed at first read. It's kind of like God's blessing on your life heretofore. You've taken it for granted. You've forgotten that it's the Lord your God who has blessed

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you, the Lord God of your salvation that has prospered you. And you've forgotten Him. You've turned from Him, and here He's blessed your life. ...He doesn't have to do anything except just remove His hand of blessing.

Because you see, I am the Lord your God that makes your crops so abundant. I am the Lord, your God that blesses your finances and prospers you. It's Me, and all I have to do because I'm the one holding it all together. This is what we're going to see in Hebrews. He holds everything together, and His hand of blessing is on our lives and as soon as He takes it off, what will ensue is what we read here.

It's also what we read in Haggai Chapter 1, beginning in verse 3. "Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses and this temple to lie in ruins?" Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: "Consider your ways!" Stop right there; I think those three words stand alone. We would do well to take heed, "consider your ways."

I think of Ecclesiastes 7:14, which basically says this: During the days of prosperity and joy, praise the Lord. But when adversity strikes, in the days of adversity, stop and consider that God has allowed one as well as the other so that no man can know his future.

In other words, nothing is guaranteed. In the day of prosperity or the day of adversity, our reliance, our dependence has to be upon the Lord and the Lord alone. God will sometimes deem it necessary to bring adversity alongside the prosperity if for no other reason other than to get us to do these three words: Consider our ways. Have I got your attention now? Yes, you do, Lord. Good, because there's something I want to show you. I need to correct you. I need to redirect you.

This is what's happening here with the Prophet Haggai, with the Israelites. Verse 6, "You have sown much, and bring in little. You eat but do not have enough. You drink, but you are not filled with drink. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages earns wages to put into a bag with holes. Thus says the Lord of hosts (And here it is again), 'Consider your ways! Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,' says the Lord. 'You looked for much, but indeed it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?' says the Lord of hosts. 'Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. Therefore, the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands."

I think about Malachi. The only time in all of the Bible where God says to test Him concerning the tithes and offerings. He says, "Test Me in this and see if I will not open up the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing on you that will be so abundant you will not have room enough to receive it." Just test Me. Try Me; try seeing. That was not very good. Just test Me on this. Put Me to the test, see what I'll do.

And then, He also makes this very important statement. He says, "I will also keep the devourer away from you." Oh, wait a minute, the devourer? You mean there's a devourer? Yeah, I'm holding him back. I'm holding back the devourer, and whatever that devourer is, you can fill in the blank. In other words, I can make the little much, but I so too can make the much become little.

Verse 12, "Woe (which means curse) to the multitude of many people who make a noise like the roar of the seas and to the rushing of nations that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations will rush like the rushing of many waters. But God (I love those two words) will rebuke them, and they will flee far away and be chased like the chaff of the mountains before the wind, like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. Then behold (verse 14) at eventide, trouble! And before the morning, he is no more. This is the portion of those who plunder us and the lot of those who rob us."

It's this last verse, among others, but it's another reason why it's believed that the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy concerning Damascus is yet in the future. This is because it seems to

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indicate that the destruction is sudden. So much so that it's overnight, possibly within a 24-hour period because, in the morning, there is no more: complete destruction. This comports with Ezekiel 38, and so too does it comport with 1 Thessalonians 5:3. A verse I know you're very familiar with where the Apostle Paul writes about this day, this time, at the time of the end. He says while they (keyword) are saying two words, "peace and security," some of your translations render it "safety." It's the Greek word *asfaleia*, which means safety or security, peace, and security.

While they are saying those two words, sudden destruction comes on them; again, keyword, "them." Do you know the thing about sudden destruction? It's sudden! I know, again, very profound. It's going to happen suddenly, unexpectedly, destruction. It's going to happen so fast while they are saying "peace and security."

Then the Apostle Paul, true to form like the Savior before him, will use this analogy of a woman in labor, likening it to birth pains, which come in greater frequency and greater intensity. And the key again is that they will not escape. That's important. Why? Because - wait for it: they won't escape.

Well, that kind of infers that someone might. Not "them;" they won't escape. But who will escape pray tell? I'm so glad you asked you asked. You asked, right? I'm going to tell you. There's a difference between "they" and "we." We escape because we who are alive and remain will be caught up in the great escape.

I love it when - I don't necessarily love it; it's a sanctified... How do I say it? It's too late; I already blew it. I'm trying to sound pastoral here.

When those who take issue with the pre-tribulation rapture doctrine (the sound doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture), they'll say something to the effect that you pre-tribbers are all alike. You just want to escape. I'm like, you don't? Yes, I want to escape. Have you read what happens in the seven-year tribulation? Do you want to be here for this? I don't!

We who are alive and remain will be caught up. We will escape suddenly. How suddenly? Oh, the Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians says in the twinkling, not blink, twinkling of an eye. Mathematicians love this verse, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. Because of the measurement, the calculation of a twinkling is like a sparkle in the eye, not a blink. I mean, I think it's something like 1/800th jillionth to the whatever billionth power of a second. That's pretty fast. That's pretty sudden.

And we put off... This alone, right? We put off our corruptible bodies! Come quickly, Lord Jesus. And we get our new glorified bodies. I can't wait already. I already put in my order, how about you? I'm going to get hair this time! I know that for all eternity—enough of my problems. So, we put off corruptible; we put on, that quickly, incorruptible. We get our glorified bodies in the twinkling of an eye—we who are alive and remain.

Here's where I'm going with this in closing. When sudden destruction goes down, we go up. Let me try that again. I'm going to say the same thing in a different way. We escape, right? They don't escape. We escape because we're the "we." So important: Be a "we." Hey, what was the Bible study about? Be a "we." That was what it was about. Be a "we," not a "they." Because they don't escape, we do. Is it possible? And I believe it is.

In fact, I'll even go as far as saying that not only is it possible, I believe it's probable that the rapture of the church will be simultaneous with the sudden destruction prophesied in the pages of Holy Writ. And when that sudden destruction comes down on them, we go up with Him, praise the Lord.

Why don't you stand? We'll have the worship team come up. This is one of those chapters you just don't want to end, right? Praise the Lord for His Word, our Blessed Hope.

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You see what's happening right now in the Middle East, and the only conclusion that you can reasonably come to is that we are on the cusp of seeing what we just studied tonight come to pass. It's just that close. It's just any time, any time.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank You so much. Lord, the world is so crazy right now, and it's getting worse, it seems. It's getting so hard too. I know, Lord, that as I close in prayer, I do so in the hearing of many who are really having a hard time and struggling and really going through much in the way of adversity and difficulty. I pray that tonight, this would be a much-needed reminder of what we have to look forward to. That trumpet is going to sound. This is not our home; we've long overstayed; our welcome in this world, not our home. We're ready to go home, Lord. We want to be ready, and really You have made us ready with everything that's happening in the world. It has certainly loosened whatever tight grip we may have still had on this world, for sure, to ready us for the next.

Lord, thank You for telling us in Your Word what this world, this awful world, is going to look like at the time of the end because as we look at what's happening, it is exactly like You said it would be. And that means one thing; that means our redemption draws nigh.

Lord come quickly, Maranatha. In Jesus' name. Amen.