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Far From Home

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The Anointed One

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Daniel 9:20-27



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God starts everyone's story at a particular time with particular people in a place we call home and subtly. At various times in our life, the foundations under our feet shift and we find ourselves far from our place, far from our people, far from home. Where do we find courage when the foundations shake? How do we live in a new place that feels hostile to our faith? How do we live and thrive? We are far from home.

Providence family, it's great to see you. If you are a guest here with us, welcome. We're thrilled you joined us. If you have a Bible, turn with me to Daniel 9. In a moment, I'm going to pray. Before we do, let me just tell you in advance that the 9th chapter of Daniel is pretty spectacular. In fact, I should say that if you're here in the room and you don't have a Bible in your hand, it would be really helpful and there's a lot of Bibles in the chairs near you. If you don't have one of your own, take that home as a gift.

Let me also say for those who are at the beach or the mountains for this weekend, we're glad you've also tuning in with us. Hope you're having a great time. If it's your regular pattern during a sermon to say, "Hey, look a squirrel," this is going to be a really difficult sermon for you. Okay. If you're easily distracted and you constantly go in and out, this is going to be a really difficult one.

Particularly when we get to the second point, it's going to be really incumbent upon you for this to be helpful in any way for you to really focus in as though you have something personally at stake. To help us with that, I want to pray for us. Okay.

Father in heaven, we bow before you and we acknowledge that this is your word and we want to hear from you. I ask that you would help us. Would you pour your spirit out upon us? God, I prayed that the words of my mouth and each of the meditations of our hearts would be pleasing to you. I pray for those who are in the room, who love you, who care about you, who love your word, would you use these words and the precision of your fulfilled promises to fortify their faith, to encourage them this morning.

I pray for those who have a relationship with you and yet because of the great difficulty of their days today that they doubt or wonder the totality of your love for them, maybe feeling like they feel unloved. I just ask God that you would use this to remind them today that you love them deeply.

For those who have no relationship with you and yet are open, who are here, maybe were invited or simply coming to hear more about who Jesus is and what he did and why people sing to him and think He's important, God, would you use these words from Daniel 9, Lord, to draw their attention to either plant a seed or perhaps to water a seed that was planted long ago or maybe today that you would do the miracle in their heart that you would cause them to put their faith in Christ.

For all of these things that are bigger than us, we need your help. We ask because this is rather confusing, we have a need for understanding and therefore we need your spirit to help us understand.

We ask God for your mercy to help us with insight and understanding. We pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

We all know that anticipation is part of life. It's just something that happens. We all get excited about something that's in the future and then we anticipate it. It's interesting that all of us have those things. It may be a day out, a week out, a month out, in about a month we anticipate a day when all three of our boys will be with them all at the same time for about a week. We're excited about that.

We anticipate that. It's been said that anticipation is the ability to imagine it happening, whatever it is, when it's not happening and while life keeps happening. What you find is this, is that when you have anticipation, there's something that you're looking for. When that something is delayed, even Proverbs says, "It makes the heart sick." Hope deferred makes the heart sick.

Now, that's really important because the Old Testament, which is the majority of the Bible, is all written in anticipation. Anticipation for the day of Christ. It's interesting that the deeper that you move through the Old Testament and the more that you look, the more desirable the day of Christ actually becomes. You don't have to turn very far three chapters into the Bible and you find that this one who is coming, He's not only the promised one, but He's the savior of the world.

A few chapters later and you get the chapter 22 and you find out that he's going to be the provider for all of His people. You turn the page, the next book of the Bible, Exodus, and there you find in chapter 15 that He is the healer of His people. Two chapters later, He's the refuge of His people.

You keep flipping and you turn to 2 Samuel and there you find that He's the everlasting King of Righteousness for His people. You keep turning, you get to the Book of Job and there you find that He is the Redeemer of His people. You keep turning, you get to Psalms. There's lots of different things about Christ in the Psalms. One of them is in Psalm 1:18 and there we're told that He's the cornerstone.

Now, some of us, we don't even know what a cornerstone is, much less why we need one. But what a cornerstone is the very first stone that's laid on a house in order to build the whole house upon. When there's a cornerstone and it's laid effectively, what happens is the house can survive a storm. But if it is none, if there's no cornerstone, if it's built randomly, then what happens is it falls during the storm.

What a wonderful thing to anticipate that we could build our life upon something that could survive storms, anxiety and fears, all kinds of problems that we face in life. You keep turning in Isaiah and there we find that He's the wonderful counselor for the confused. He's mighty God for those who are weary. He's a everlasting Father for people who are afraid. He's the Prince of Peace for people who are anxious.

You keep turning, you get to Haggai, and there we find that He's the Soul's Desire of all the nations.

You keep turning, you get to Zachariah. In Zachariah, we're told that He's the fountain that washes our sins away. But here in Daniel 9, we're told to anticipate the Anointed One. The Anointed One.

Now if you're brand new with us, you wonder what is Daniel? We just jumped in. We're all the way to chapter 9. We would do it a series through Daniel. Let me give you the backstory of Daniel that leads up to chapter 9. 490 years before chapter 1 was written or before chapter 1 happened, the people of Israel were in rebellion against God.

Their sins were many, but there was one kind of sin that is really pertinent to our study today and that is that for 490 years we're told that God's people rebelled against his instruction and that was to give the land a sabbath rest every seventh year. God's plan, this is a society that's built on farming, crops and herds and things like that. If you had a piece of land, you were supposed to divide your land up into seven portions, and every year you were supposed to not farm one of them just to be able to give that land rest, that God was going to provide exceedingly more than we needed with the other six portions of our entire lot of seven portions.

Every seventh year was a Sabbath for the land. Yet because they were in rebellion and all kinds of different sins, one of the sins that they said is we're not resting the land. They went 490 years without resting the land. We find in 2 Chronicles 36 that God said, "Because you did this, I am going to give the land rest and that you are going to be in exile for 70 years, one for every year you didn't give it its rest."

Sure enough, when we get to chapter 1, the king of Babylon comes into Jerusalem and wipes it out over three different invasions. In every invasion, he took people and he exiled people back to Babylon. Well, Daniel was a young man. He was a teenager and he was one of the very first exiles who went to Babylon. Daniel as well as the Jews, by the time we get to this section, chapter 9, he's been in exile in Babylon for close to 68 years.

He knows it's close because we're told in chapter 9:2 that he's reading Jeremiah the prophet, and there he finds out, "Wait a minute, it's supposed to be 70 years." He starts the counting, he's like, "It's close. It's close." Then he recognizes something hasn't happened. He says, "In spite of the fact that we've been here almost seven decades."

He says, "That we of a people have not repented of our sin. We've not obeyed the Lord and we've not intreated the favor of the Lord," which means literally the words are to smooth the face of the Lord, smooth the face. What is that? Well, you think about it, our sin, it causes God grief. Grief in an expression form can look like a sour face.

What he's saying is for 70 years the people of God did nothing to put a smile on his face, to seek his pleasure, to seek his honor.

Daniel in chapter 9, he says, “If the people won’t do it, I’m going to do it. I’m going to confess my own sin and I’m going to confess the sins of all the people as though they were my own seeking the favor of God’s mercy.”

Well, sure enough, as these 70 years come to a close Daniel of praise and God responds to Daniel’s prayer in the most remarkable way. Verse 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,” that’s Jerusalem, “while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at first came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice.”

“He made me understand speaking with me and saying, ‘O, Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. At the beginning of your plea for mercy, a word went out and I have come to tell it to you. For you are greatly loved. Therefore, consider the word and understand the vision.’” Before we get to the vision, which should be the second and third point, I want to simply make a point a note. If you take notes, you want to think about a spiritual truth this week it would be this, is that God provides exceedingly more than we ask or imagine.

This is actually echoed in Ephesians, but God Almighty, He loves to do exceedingly more than we ask or imagine. This should buoy our confidence and hope when we pray to the Lord knowing that whatever I give to Him, He could potentially give me back even more than I would hope to receive. I just want you to think about God’s exceeding grace here. Daniel is praying for mercy.

It says that the angel, Gabriel, if you notice that he appeared in the form of a man. Okay. He even calls him here, the man Gabriel, but he is not a man because he flies to him. Okay. Keep that in mind. This is son, this is a man who can fly. Well, if you remember back in Daniel 7, when Gabriel was sent to give Daniel an interpretation of the dream, it says that he looked, he had the appearance of a man.

In other words, an angel could look anything like God wanted him to. He could have said, “Oh, he looked like a tiger.” But no, he looked like a man. Here he says, “I saw the man Gabriel again just as the first.” What I want you to see though is this. It’s amazing. When did he see? He puts this little nugget in here so that we can smile at the sovereignty of God.

Look what it says in verse 21, it says, “Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice.” Now, when the temple was functioning, you have to remember it’s not functioning. It hasn’t been functioning for almost 68 years. When they came in, they wiped out the temple, they wiped out the sacrifice, all the sacrifices haven’t been happening all of this time.

Yet Daniel is so oriented around the things of God that he’s telling time of what’s happening in his day as though they’re wrapped around the things that he knows would be on God’s heart if this wasn’t

happening. He says this, he says, “He came in the evening sacrifice when the temple was functioning, a lamb would’ve been slain in the evening sacrifice to cover the sins of the people and make sacrifice to the Lord at 3:00 p.m.”

There was a morning sacrifice at 9:00 a.m. every day and there was an evening sacrifice at 3:00 p.m. every day. Now check this out. Daniel is confessing sin at the very same time that a lamb would’ve been offered for sin. While he is praying for this, God sends Gabriel to tell Daniel how he’s going to forever make an end to sin.

Verse 22, he says, “Daniel, I want you to know that I’ve come out to give you insight and understanding.” This is proof that he gives exceedingly more than we can ask or imagine because Daniel, through all of his prayer in the first 19 verses of chapter 9, never ask for insight or understanding. He never asked for clarity into God’s will. He’s only asking for mercy, and God comes to and He says, “I’m going to give you mercy, but I’m also going to give you what you haven’t asked for. I’m going to give you insight and understanding.”

Notice what it says in verse 23. He says, “At the beginning of your pleas for mercy, a word went out. This is awesome. It means that there’s no hesitation in heaven when you begin praying. He says at the beginning of your pleas, that would be verse 4. In other words, Gabriel’s sitting there and he goes, “When you began your prayer with the words, “Oh, Lord,” verse 4, “The great and awesome God,” God almighty in heaven said, “Hey, Gabriel, go, tell him this.”

I have come to tell it to you. Now, let me tell you why I’m coming to tell it to you is because you’re greatly loved, literally strongly desired. You’re greatly loved. Now, this is a man who has been exiled. This is a man who’s received a new name in a foreign place. This is a man who’s been ripped away from his family and his culture.

This is somebody who’s been falsely accused during these years. He’s been betrayed during these years. He’s been persecuted during these years, and so surely that is evidence that God’s love is not measured by an easy life. There’s a better evidence of God’s love for us that Gabriel is going to point to next.

But then he says this, and I would say it to you, he said, Daniel, you better focus in here. Consider the words and understand the vision. If you’ve been all over the place, if you hope to regather, you need to get regather right now. Okay. Because the second thing I want you to see which begins the vision is that God promises the arrival and ministry of the Messiah.

He promises the arrival and ministry of the Messiah. What you are about to see with your eyes in these passages in these four verses are something that only God almighty can pull off. Verse 24, 70 weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city. By the way, we’re not going to read it all at the same time

because there's a whole lot in here, okay, 70 weeks.

Some of your Bible translations will actually write 70/7, some of your Bibles are like mine. It says 70 weeks, and then there's a little mark next to the little one, and you can look down to the bottom of the page and it says, "A lot of translations will say 70/7." Some of your translations will actually say, "Seven sets of years," 70 of 7 sets of years. I know it's confusing, but just think about what's happening. Okay.

We all think about time in decades, don't we? We're like, "Hey, what were your favorite music?" "Oh, I just love the '80s. Oh, I love the '90s. That was my favorite music." Well, that's not how they thought. They thought in 7s, not 10s. There was a week and had seven days. At the beginning, there was a Sabbath. There was one day of rest for every week.

But in addition to that, every seven years there was one year of rest. The Jewish people, they began to view time through metrics of blocks of seven years. We'd say, "Man, I love the music of the '90s." They'd be like, "Man, the third set of sevens, man, that was awesome back then." In other words, 70 weeks is like saying 70 blocks of seven years or 490 years are decreed determined. Literally the word is cutout.

If you're into watermelon, you cut it up and all of a sudden some of you got that little circle thing where you dig in and you make little balls of watermelon. You know what I'm talking about, right? You know what I'm talking about. You see, you're cutting out. You have a whole watermelon. We're going to cut it out. We're going to put it to the side. We're cutting out a piece. This is what God's doing.

He's saying, "In all of human history, I am going to cut out 490 years because of their significance, and I'm going to focus on them to help you understand what's going to happen in these moments." It's pretty amazing. Then just notice who this is for, about your people. Daniel is a Jewish man, for the Jewish people and your holy city, that would be Jerusalem.

What's going to happen in these 490 years? Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and profit and to anoint a most holy place. Let's work through each one of them briefly.

First to finish the transgression. He doesn't say to finish transgressions, it's the transgression. The article is there, "the." Sin he's talking about here for the Jewish people and most of the world is the sin of apostasy where God Almighty is worthy of our regard and we give Him no regard. Not only do we not give Him any regard, we do not give His provision, His savior any regard.

He's saying within this period of time, there is going to be an end to the transgression. This isn't the only prophet who actually spoke about this. God almighty also put it upon the heart of Zachariah, and He

gave him this message. In Zachariah 12 He says, "Look, I will pour out on the house of David," that's the Jewish people, "A spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that when they look on me on whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him."

In other words, what this is saying is there is coming a day not only for the Jewish people but for all people, you and me, everyone, when we will see Christ in all of His glory with holes in his hands and feet, and for everyone who rejected Him, we will all say with the Jews, "What have we done?"

He says, "In this block of time, the transgression of apostasy will end." But not only that, notice what he goes on. He goes, second thing he says is to put an end to sin, literally to abolish sin forever. Third, to atone for iniquity. That's literally to provide one final sacrifice to cover all of sin. Fourth, to bring everlasting righteousness a day when everybody always does what is right all the time in His eyes.

Fifth, to seal both vision and profit. To seal both vision and profit means that not only are all the promises and prophecies about the Christ to be fulfilled when He arrives and He accomplishes it all, but he's actually talking about the day when we will not need any more profit, nor will we need any more revelation because we will see God face-to-face. You won't need a teacher to tell you what he's like because you'll see him face-to-face.

Sixth, to anoint a most holy place. I believe that what this is talking about is referenced multiple times in the Bible, and that is that Christ is going to bring a new heaven and new earth. That new heaven and new earth will be sealed with purity forever. Let me describe it for you. There are three architectural places in the Bible that have a cube.

A cube is something that's the same width, height, length. It's a cube. The first cube we find when it comes to a building in the entire Bible is a tent. It was called the tabernacle. We find it in Exodus. God said, "I want you to build a tabernacle. My glory will live in the holy of holies." The actual tabernacle was a rectangle. But when you actually ... He said, but the holy of holies, a place that only the high priest can go. It's the most holy place. It's where My glory's going to live. It was precisely a cube in every direction.

Fast forward, Solomon builds a temple at God's commands. We're told that although it was twice as large the actual holy of holies, where God's glory dwelt, where perfect purity lived, it was a cube. Do you know there's only one other cube in the entire Bible when it comes to architectural design? Do you know what it is? In Revelation 21, when God Almighty describes heaven itself, He says that it is a perfect cube.

In other words, when He says He's going to anoint a most holy place as He's going to bring about the creation, installation, and we will live in a place that is marked by perfection and purity. Now we got to ask the question, "All right, all that's going to happen. Who's going to pull it off?" Verse 25, he says in verse 25, "Know therefore and understand from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an

anointed one, a prince.”

We hear the word anointed one, we think, “Oh, that’s interesting.” But anointed one is a different kind of a word. It’s pretty unusual word. In fact, it’s the word “Masiah” in Hebrew. What you find is the same word. There’s a word anointed one, Masiah, and in English we call it “Messiah.” It’s the Messiah, the anointed one.

In Greek, however, where we have the New Testament, the exact same word is Christos, and it’s where we get the word Christ. If you’ve ever heard the name Jesus Christ, that’s not His first and last name. Jesus is His name, and Christ is His title. It’s His authority. He’s saying that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus is the Anointed One. It says here that He’s a prince, a prince because He’s the son of God.

Now, when will these 490 years begin? Notice what he says, “Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem.” Well, it won’t be very long after this very moment in time when Cyrus the Great instructs the people, the Jewish people, that they can go back and they can rebuild the temple, but not the city and not the walls.

You have to wait for another Persian king, Artaxerxes. He gives a decree that we read about in Nehemiah 2, there we know in history that on March 14th, 445 BC, Artaxerxes ordered that the temple, I’m sorry, that Jerusalem, the wall moat, square, the whole thing be rebuilt. Then all of a sudden Gabriel adds a little bit more detail. Notice what he does.

He says, “Know therefore and understand that the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of the anointed one, a prince,” and then notice, “There shall be seven weeks and then 62 weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time.” You notice that you simply add these two up.

We start with 70 weeks of years or 490 years. Then he wants to break it into two different pieces. Actually three, but here it’s two. Okay. We’ll find the last one here in a minute. Okay. He started this in seven weeks. That’s 49 years. We know from history, Nehemiah and Malachi, that the entire wall was built significantly sooner than 49 years, but the entire city was reconstructed after 49 years.

From that moment he says, and then there’s going to be 62 more weeks or 62 more 7s or 434 years. We add those up and what you get is 483 years or 69 weeks. Now if you’re like, “Wait, what about the last one? It’s supposed to be 70.” This will be there in third point. Okay. What he’s saying is this. Now just think about what he’s saying. Gabriel is telling Daniel that the anointed one who’s going to come and accomplish these things is going to accomplish them in the full 70, but in 69 weeks he’s going to come.

There's been a lot of people such as Sir Robert Anderson, I'm sorry, I forgot his name, who wrote a book, it's called *The Coming Prince*. What he did ... His name is Sir, because he lived in Europe and he worked for Scotland Yard and he was a detective and he was so overwhelmed by this prophecy that says, "I want to know exactly what this is."

Knowing what this was, he says, "Well, we should then if we know that the order was March 14th, 445 BC, if we simply count 483 years, Christ should have come on that moment. Is that what happened? What he did was he said, "You know what? We should be careful, because we operate on a solar calendar, but the Jewish people, it was on the basis of the lunar calendar, and so there was 360 days in a year in the Jewish calendar."

You add things like leap years and things like this, but if you simply multiply 360 days times 483 years, what you find is he said, well, that's 173,880 days. Starting on March 14th, the 445 BC, he started just ticking off days and counting all the way to see where they would land in his research. You can see it. I mean, it's just right there. These days expire on a day in the Jewish calendar called the 10th of Nissan, 8032.

Now the 10th of Nissan is a very important day because that's the day, just a few days before the Passover, when they select the Passover lamb to be sacrificed in order to make atonement for the sins of all the people of Israel. Now, check this out. He and many others believe that this precise day that when 173,880 days from the day that Artaxerxes says, "You can go and rebuild it."

Not only did it land on that day, but that day was the day that Jesus came into Jerusalem riding a colt. For the first time in His ministry allowed people to call Him the King. Look what it says in Luke 19. When He, that's Jesus, drew near and saw the city, He wept over it saying, "Would that you, even you had known on this day the things that make for peace."

"But now they're hidden from your eyes for the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side," this is all speaking about Jerusalem, "and tear you down to the ground and you and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another in you." Now, notice this, "Because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Jesus is saying, "I'm holding you accountable for you should have known this day." Well, shortly after Jesus came to Jerusalem, something happened, right? This is what we find next in verse 26. Verse 26, He says, "And after the 62 weeks," now don't forget the 62 is after the 7, we're up to 69 weeks, "an anointed one shall be cut off," the word cutoff it literally means to kill, "and shall have nothing."

Jesus had nothing. He had everything, and all of a sudden, He took it all off and he came to the earth.

He was utterly poor. He chose poor parents. He had poor followers. He had no home, no place to lay his head. He had nothing. On the cross, they took His clothes. His burial, he didn't have enough money to have his own tomb, so He was buried in a borrowed tomb.

Do you know what time he died? Both Mark and Luke tell us that he died at 3:00 p.m., the time of the evening sacrifice. He who had everything became nothing, so the we who have nothing receive everything. That's the gospel. Then all of a sudden there's a dramatic shift. He says, "And the people of the prince who is to come," now we got another prince.

If you were here in chapter 7 and 8, you remember that there's another prince that they call the antichrist who masquerades of being like the prince. That's why there's the Christ who's the prince, and then there's the masquerading prince who's the antichrist and he shall destroy the city, I'm sorry. "And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary and it shall come with a flood, and to the end, there shall be war. Desolations are decreed."

You remember it was the Romans who crucified Jesus, and it was also the Romans in 8070, just as Jesus said in Luke 19, and just as Daniel promised here, who leveled the temple once again. Daniel 7 and 8 tell us that this prince to come is the antichrist who are going to rise from some confederation of nations that have ties to the old Roman Empire.

You remember that I've tried to teach you several times now that prophecies in the Bible, they oftentimes have dual fulfillment, something close and something far away. We've talked about it with this same picture that when you look at these mountains from a long way away and they all look all these ... If each of these were different promises or events, they all look like they're really close together, but the closer you get, one peak might be miles away from another peak.

What you find here is that after Christ was cut off at the 69th week, the clock pauses. In Romans 9:10-11, we see that God pauses his focus on Israel and he begins to build his church among the Gentiles around the world until the antichrist appears and we enter into the 70th week. This is the third point if you're taking notes, and that is that God promises the rise and fall of the antichrist.

If you're around for all of these, you know that when we looked at 7, 8 and now 9, three different visions, the next vision takes three chapters. Okay. Next three weeks, we're going to ... three parts to one vision. It's extravagant. Okay. What you're going to find is they all kind of say the same thing. Every one of them, there's antichrist who's around. You're talking about the end of time.

This is important. I know when you hear the word antichrist, sometimes we think of movies and novels. But please, no, it's real. He is real. Notice what he says in verse 27, the last verse. He says, "And he shall

make strong covenant with many for one week.” This is what we have learned. This is what we’ve been learning is just before Christ returned, there will come a final seven-year, final week, the 70th week that Jesus calls the tribulation.

It’s also called the day of the Lord, the day of distress, the wrath of the lamb. Jacob’s trouble. During this time, a ruler is going to rise with ties to the Roman Empire and is going to make strong covenant to protect the Jewish people and even rebuild their temple. Friends, when you see a temple being built in Jerusalem, that is definitely time to wake up.

Then notice what happens. For half the week ... Now if this week is seven years, half of it is what? Three and a half years. Now, does that sound familiar? If you’ve been around in chapter 7, we learned it was a time times and half a time. The time is one year time is two years half a time is six months, three and a half years.

In the book of Revelation, he goes ... In case you missed it, let me just tell you, it’s going to be 42 months, exactly three and a half years. Daniel one more time in chapter 12, he goes like ... if you missed that, let me boil it down to date. We’re going to get to there in several in a month. Half of the week. He says, “And he’s going to put an end to sacrifice an offering, and on the wing of abomination shall come one who makes desolate until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.

Halfway through three and a half years, this ruler is going to unleash war against the saints. He will put an end to sacrifice by desecrating the temple, putting his own image in the holy of holies and demanding worldwide worship. This is what Jesus said when He says, “Is when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing in the holy place, let the reader understand, just as all hell breaks loose on the earth, all heaven is going to break loose on the earth and it will be the wrath of the lamb.”

The final three and a half years, Revelation 6 through 19, it is dramatic and it is pulsating and it is devastating. Some people ask the question, “Well, who’s going to be here? There’s a whole lot of debate among Christians about this thing called a rapture. Okay. If you hear rapture, don’t think return of Christ. Rapture is something that where we leave. Okay.

There’s a verse, there’s only one. If it means rapture, this is where it’s from. It’s from First Thessalonians 4. It says there in the last days, last trumpet, the Lord’s going to come down on the clouds and the dead will rise first and we shall meet the Lord in the air. A lot of people through history said, “This is the pretribulation. Before those seven years, he’s going to take the church right on out of here.

There’s a few reasons for that that a lot of people believe. One is because he tells us that the church,

that God's people have not been destined for wrath. It's His wrath that's being poured out. Then you also look at the book of Revelation, and in the very beginning he writes seven letters to seven churches. Then once you get to chapter 4, there's no mention of church anymore.

Some people believe in something called a pretribulation rapture. Before those seven years, everyone who has trusted Christ leaves for seven years. Some people believe it happens in the middle part, three and a half years when things get really bad, and some people believe, no, we're just going to be around the whole time that He's coming one time and that's it.

He said, "Well, what do you believe?" What I believe is this, and this is what I want to encourage you to consider. I think that we will be raptured. I hope we will be raptured. I do hope. But I am preparing my heart and I'm seeking to prepare yours, that if we are here and we have to die for our faith, like many will, that we will have strong enough faith to endure that time until the end.

The emphatic message of Jesus is, I am coming and you better be ready. Be ready. If we get to escape it, then we'll just praise him. But be ready. At the end of that seventh year, Jesus Christ is going to return. He's going to crush evil by the breath of his mouth, and he's going to establish the kingdom of heaven forever. What will it look like after that final return of Christ?

Let me tell you what it'll look like. It will look like the finish of the transgression. There will be no more apostasy. It will be a full end of sin. There will be, and we will celebrate one atonement for iniquity, and we will look at Him all the days of our life and say, "Worthy, are you who is slain." We'll enjoy when he brings in everlasting righteousness. There will be a seal or completion of both vision and profit because we will see Christ face-to-face.

We'll enjoy an anointed holy place called the new heavens and a new earth that is perfected impurity at the end of 70 weeks. That's what it is. What are we supposed to do tomorrow? Let me close with a few thoughts. First, if you do not have a relationship with Christ, I urge you today to repent of sin and trust Christ. These prophecies are not meant to turn us into investigators. They're meant to turn us into believers and worshipers.

The day is coming when every single knee in heaven, earth and under the earth are going to bow before Christ. But there is a timetable to do it, and it is here on the earth when it is absolutely critical that you make that decision in this moment. I want you to know every single person who had no relationship or faith in Christ, who is in hell are all confessing that Jesus is Lord today, but it is too late. I urge you today, confess your sin to him. Confess your belief in Him. Confess him is Lord, be forgiven. Trust the precision of God's faithfulness.

Second, I may urge you to remember that we're loved, you are loved. If you're going through it right now and you're like, "I don't know if God loves me." He loves you. If you don't even have a relationship with Christ, he loves you. You're hearing this because he loves you. Nothing can separate us, those of us who have trusted him from his love.

Third, let me urge us to pursue holiness in anticipation of the day. Peter writes in a second letter. He says, "Now scoffers are going to come and they're going to say, hey, you keep talking about Jesus coming back. I don't see Him. I don't think He's coming back." He responds and he says, "Look, you got to remember that God is patient not wanting anyone to perish. But then he gives an instruction to us, his people."

He says, "Now, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of the Lord?" Peter is not only urging us to repent of our sin today, he's asking us to ask a question today and every day. You say, "Well, what would be that question?" It's this, what do I want to be found doing today if it is today?

Fourth, let's pursue people in anticipation of the day. Jesus is the only savior, the whole world, 70% of the 1.1 billion people in RDU have no relationship with him, 75% the 8 billion people around the world have either no relationship or they even don't even know his name. God Almighty has called us not only to be prepared, but to help other people be prepared by going and taking the gospel of forgiveness to them.

This is why there's over 100 people from Providence right now overseas this week in different places around the world trying to tell people about Christ. As the day draws near as we anticipate seeing him, mercy, love for Christ, and mercy for people should well up to where we say, I must go, I must give, I must pray, I must serve, I must help get the gospel to people who don't know because I may be ready, but they most assuredly are not.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, I ask that you would take these words and help us to remember the ones that all of them that were from you. I pray, Father, that you would lead people to put their trust in you. I pray that you would help those who feel burdened and broken to know that they're loved, that he would help us to leave our sin, repent of it, knowing that it is not how we want to be found.

I ask that you would help us to have enough hope in our heart, that we would pursue people with the gospel, telling people, going to people, serving people in order that they too might be able to be prepared. These things are, in many ways, are frightening and overwhelming, but we thank you, father, that you reveal to us by your spirit and you give us insight and understanding.

Help us to remember. Help us to cherish. Help us to love your faithfulness to your word. We sing to you now. We just stoke our hope. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.



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