

Return of the King - Lesson 2 of 21 - Landmarks of Prophecy

I want to welcome you again, friends, to this special series of meetings called 'Landmarks of Prophecy' - an epic Bible adventure spectacular. The lesson tonight is of special importance because we're going to be talking about, really, the climax of history which is the second coming of Jesus. The title for our lesson tonight is 'The Return of the King' and the story that we're looking at tonight comes from 2 Kings chapter 11.

Probably one of the most wicked queens in history was the daughter of Jezebel. Have you ever heard the name 'Jezebel' before? She had a daughter that really was even worse than the mother. Her name was Athaliah. And while Jezebel was willing to kill the prophets of God, Athaliah was willing to kill her own grandchildren. When her son, Ahaziah, died in battle, she did not want to share the throne with anyone. She seized power by trying to eliminate all of the royal seed of David and she had her grandchildren exterminated and her son Ahaziah had several children, but one of them who was one year old, his name was Joash - actually Ahaziah's sister, Jehosheba, she scooped him up, spirited him away, and hid him - the high priest guarded him - in the temple of Solomon that was largely neglected during the time of Athaliah because she was a pagan queen. And so this baby was hidden there in the temple of God for six years while Athaliah ruled over the land.

And she was brutal - just a fiendish dictator. Well, finally, when little Joash - he was one year old when they carried him off into the temple. She thought she had exterminated all of them - you know, I want to pause here and just remind you of something else. You see, the devil knows - the devil always knew that God was going to send a Savior Messiah. He didn't know exactly when.

There are three times in the Bible the devil made an effort to exterminate the royal seed to prevent the Savior from coming. Once he had all the baby boys in Egypt thrown in the river, but Moses escaped and became a great Savior. Another time he tried to - and this was the second time - eliminate the royal seed of David, because the prophecy said the Savior would come through the seed of David, but little Joash survived. The third time, Roman soldiers went into Bethlehem to kill all the baby boys, but Jesus escaped to Egypt. And so, you can see through history in the Bible that there was an effort to keep the Messiah from coming - to keep The Son of God from becoming a man because the devil knew that would spell his doom. If Christ came and lived a perfect life and died in our behalf, then humanity could be saved. Maybe more about that tomorrow.

So, after six years, the high priest, Jehoiada - do you know the high priest, Jehoiada, actually lived longer than Moses. He lived 130 years. The high priest, Jehoiada carefully trained this child, knowing he would be the King. They knew they couldn't hide him forever and, you know, little boys have to go out and play and here he was cooped up in the temple for years, probably didn't have much of a suntan. And finally they said, 'Look, we need to present him, even though he's young, before the people. And so, at the end of six years of Athaliah's reign they brought Joash out. They did it just as the Sabbath was beginning, on the sixth day of the week, and he told the people - the soldiers - 'Guard the King. Blow the trumpets.'

The people came to the temple, they found out that a son of David had not been killed - there was still a survivor - they put the crown on his little head, they put the testimony in his hand. All the people rejoiced and they said, 'Long live the King!' And Athaliah heard this ruckus from the palace - the temple wasn't far away. She came running and she said, 'Treason! Treason!' And the Bible tells us she was carried off and all of her supporters were destroyed and the people rejoiced and Joash survived. You know, that is a storacle that is coming true in the future. This is the son of David who was hidden in the temple of the Lord for six years.

When he came out of the temple the trumpets blew. Will the trumpets blow when Jesus comes? The people rejoiced. Those who followed him were saved. the Kingdom was liberated. Those who followed Athaliah were destroyed.

You go to Revelation you'll find out there's this wicked queen in Revelation 17, who persecutes the prophets and wants to destroy the royal seed. That's - she's called 'The mother of harlots' in Revelation 17 - that's what it has on her forehead. Athaliah is a type of her. All through the Bible you'll see patterns that give us little pictures of the Second Coming.

One of the principle lessons that you read about in the Bible is the return of Christ. It's called 'The Day of the Lord.' It's the culmination of this battle between good and evil. It's not going to go on forever. And you just look at how things have changed in one generation of our world. How much longer do you really think the world can last the way things are going now? Jesus said, 'Except those days be shortened, no flesh would be saved.' Now, I want to be very careful and very clear. I'm going to talk to you tonight about two principle things - maybe three.

How Jesus is going to come - we believe He's coming, but how is He going to come? Because Jesus said there'll be many false prophets and false christs and we don't want to be deceived. We're going to talk about the nearness of His coming and some of the signs that tell us about the nearness of His coming. So, with that in mind, I want to share with you something just that's going to talk a little bit now about looking at the panorama of Bible stories that tell us why, I think, that the coming of the Lord is clear.

You ever heard before 'the millennial week theory?' Some of you have heard of it. It's like this 7,000-year theory. Now this springs from a number of Scriptures. There's several Scriptures in the Bible, for instance, in Peter chapter 3, verse 8 it says a day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day. And we know the Lord made the world in how many days? Biblically, six days and he rested the seventh day, so a total of seven. Here you've got so many stories in the Bible that talk about that principle. The Hebrews had a law, farm your land for six years - and you'll find that in Exodus 23:10 - "and six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, but the seventh year you shall let it rest..." Jesus said, 'I am the sower, the Word of God is the seed.' For 6,000 years, the Word of God through the prophets and patriarchs and Jesus Himself and the apostles - He's been spreading it.

In Revelation, Christ is pictured coming to harvest. Then there's one thousand years called 'the millennium' - you read about this is Revelation chapter 20. When the earth is desolate, we live and reign with Christ and that's exactly like what you have in the Bible economy. Furthermore, there was a law of Moses. It says, in Exodus 21:2, "If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free. - After six years he goes free. The history of man is really divided up into three phases: Adam, if you go by Bible creation add up the ages, Adam was created somewhere around 6,000 years ago. Bishop Ussher's chronology used to say 4004 B.C. We don't know the exact date, but approximately 6,000 years ago.

For the first 2,000 years of the world's history, God preaches the Gospel through the patriarchs. Now that was Enoch, Noah, Methuselah. Then 2004 B.C., Approximately, Abraham is born. For the next 2,000 years God commits the oracles of truth to the Jewish nation and you've got, of course, all that record in the Bible of the Hebrews and the Jews and their being the guardians of the word. Then, approximately 4 B.C. Jesus was born. Now I know some of you are thinking, 'How could Jesus be born 4 B.C..? We used to always call B.C. 'Before Christ,' now they call it 'before the common era.' They want to take Jesus out of the measurement of time. But we used to all say 'Anno Domini' - the year of our Lord - now they've changed that to "Circa".

But that was - zero - was supposed to be the year of the birth of Jesus. After they established the A.D./B.C. dating method, they learned a lot more from archaeology and they realized King Herod the great died about 2 B.C. Or 3 B.C. He's the one who tried to kill Jesus as a baby. Jesus had to be born before He died and so we - and that plus it tells us more about the baptism of Jesus. It correlates the leadership and several rulers. We know Jesus was born about 4 B.C. For the next 2,000 years God preaches the Gospel through the church. And then you've got this judgment, this millennial reign that happens and it's like a 1,000-year Sabbath.

So you've got this pattern here. 'A day with the Lord is like a thousand years and a thousand years as a day.' So you've got approximately 2,000 years from creation to Abraham. You've got, then, about 2,000 years from Abraham - the age of the Jews - to Christ, and then you've got the last 2,000 years - the age that we're living in now - from Jesus' first coming to His second coming. Do you know, if you go back exactly 2,000 years Jesus would be about 18, 19 years old right now? We are 2,000 years after - we are living, right now, 2,000 years between the birth and the death of Jesus, which makes me think that we're right at that critical moment. So, when is He coming? I'm not setting a date.

It could be sooner than you think. Christ said, 'Except those days be shortened, no flesh would be saved.' It could be a little later than you think. The Bible says, 'God is longsuffering to us, not willing that any should perish.' So we don't know. I'd watch out for anybody that starts saying, 'Well, I know you're not supposed to know but I've got the date. I've got inside information.' And the Lord's pretty clear about that. And it's then - so that's 6,000 years and then it tells us in Revelation 20, it says, 'Then they lived and they reigned with Christ for 1,000 years. That's the Millennium. So you have this whole pattern here. Now, in the Garden of Eden - you remember when God told Adam and Eve, 'If you eat from the forbidden fruit, in the day that you eat thereof, you will surely die.' Well, Adam and Eve did, sort of, die spiritually the day they ate that fruit, but they didn't die physically. Adam lived 930 years.

Who was the oldest man that ever lived? Methuselah is technically the oldest man who ever died. The oldest man who ever lived is still alive. His name is Enoch, because he hasn't died yet. You remember the story of Enoch? He walked with God, right? He's Methuselah's father. He's still alive. That's a trick question. But, yeah, among the people who died, Methuselah was 969 years. Did any man make it to 1,000? 'In the day you eat thereof' 'a day with the Lord is like a thousand years.' That's not the only place it says that. Psalm 94, 'A thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is gone.' Psalm 84, verse 10, "For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand." And so many Bible scholars and, you know, you can go from Martin Luther up through the ranks, they all thought that the history of man would last about 6,000 years. You're living in that generation now and even if you didn't use that, look at what's happening in the world. Man'll destroy himself. By the way, it says that in Revelation, 'God'll destroy those that destroy the earth when he comes.' Man has virtually destroyed the earth and we're living in that time.

So why don't we begin with the first question in our lesson dealing with the coming King. Now, going back to our story about Jesus coming from the temple - you know, it says in Hebrews chapter 8, verse 1, Jesus is our High Priest in the heavenly temple. You can read that for yourself. Jesus is the Son of David, like little Joash.

He's going to come out of the temple. Right now, He is our Great Mediator. He's pleading His blood before the Father. Not the blood of an earthly lamb, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. It's His blood that is making atonement in the heavenly temple, not an earthly temple.

But when that ministration is over and the ministry Heaven is no longer taking place, He will come out of His temple, the trumpets will blow, there'll be a shout like there was a shout among the people, He will come, take the kingdom, and that wicked queen and all that follow her will be destroyed. And so, it's an allegory. It really happened in history, but it's an allegory of salvation. You see what I'm saying? There's a lot of others.

You know, in Revelation, it talks about seven trumpets blowing when Jesus comes. Do you know that when Joshua took the Promised Land they blew seven trumpets? You read those things in Revelation, you're going to find the key for unlocking Revelation is in the Old Testament stories. I worry, sometimes, when I go to churches and all they have is the New Testament, because you really need the foundation of the Old Testament to understand the prophecies. So who's the King that's going to come out of his temple in Heaven? Revelation 14:14, "And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat one like unto the Son of man," - that's one of the titles that Jesus used to refer to Himself - having on His

head a golden crown..." So Jesus is that one that's going to come.

Question #2: Will Jesus come quietly when He returns? Now we've - some of us have heard that just one day you're going to wake up and a friend's going to call and say, 'Have you heard what happened? Jesus came and He took all the saved people and they just sort of disappeared.' Is it quiet when Jesus comes? Now I'm going to get into this a little more so stay with me, please. What does the Bible say? 'For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God' - it's a trumpet. That's something that's loud.

You can also read in Jeremiah , verse 30, "...the Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation; He shall mightily roar upon His habitation; He shall give a shout..." So as you read through the Bible, you can see that the coming of the Lord is a very audible event.

Let me give you one more, Psalm 50, verse 3, "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence...and it shall be very tempestuous" - that means stormy - with glory - "round about Him." Now, I want to be delicate as I go into this next little segment of our lesson study. There are several different views about how the Lord is coming. I believe there are many Godly, heaven-bound people in many different denominations, okay? Everyone hear me? I know there are some disagreements and, you know, you're welcome to disagree with me.

We can all disagree as Christians without being disagreeable, right? But I want to share with you what Christians believed for the first 1,800 years of Christian history. What I'm sharing with you is not new. What I'm sharing with you is old. You know what's new, theologically, is what's sort of taken the world by storm, is this whole new 'Left Behind' scenario that came up in the last few years. I don't have time to give you the whole history of it, but this largely grew out of the Scofield study Bible and it's the - it's a futuristic interpretation of prophecy.

There are three principles used among Christians: you've got - and there's technical words, they call it the pre-trib, the mid-trib, the post-trib, and it means some - all Christians agree the Bible's very clear, there's a great tribulation connected with the second coming. But what happens? Does the tribulation happen and then Jesus comes? Does Jesus come in the midst of this tribulation? Some think it's three and a half years into a seven-year tribulation, or does the Lord come and the tribulation happens after He comes? I'm from what was the old group, it used to be the traditional view, that the church is here - and that's why Jesus said, 'He that endures unto the end.' Let me ask you, does the Bible teach that God saves His people from tribulation or through tribulation? Paul says 'It is through much tribulation' - in the book of Acts - 'We enter the Kingdom of God.' Jesus said, 'You will be hated of all nations for My name's sake.' Did God save Noah from the flood or through it? Did He save Job from his trials or through them? What about Joseph, before he reigned? Did Joseph go through a tribulation before he went to the throne? Did Moses have to suffer in the wilderness? And you find that all through the Bible God often refines His people through these trials. The Lord is coming for a bride without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. The ten plagues that fell on Egypt are very similar to the seven last plagues in Revelation. The children of Israel, God's people, were they in Egypt when those ten plagues fell? Do you know that the first three plagues the children of Israel experienced right along with the Egyptians? The last seven plagues they were preserved from, just like we will be preserved from the last seven plagues, but they were in Egypt when it happened.

He protected them from the plagues. The Bible says, 'Neither will any plague come nigh your dwelling' in Psalm 91. So will we be in the world during this time of trouble? I believe yes and I'll go on and give you some other Scriptures. The reason for that - by the way, I'm playing it safe. If you're among the Christians who think that we're just going to, you know, be raptured up before the Lord comes, bless your heart, we can be friends, but what if you're wrong? You know, Peter said, 'Don't be amazed at the fiery trials that will try your faith as though some strange thing happened.' 'Why am I being tried? I thought I was going to be taken away before all this happened.' I'm getting ready to have a faith and a trust in Jesus to

get us through that storm and that's really playing it safe. If I just suddenly get raptured up, I'll apologize in Heaven, I promise, but based on what I see in the Bible, we're going to be here and the second coming of Jesus is at the end.

Let me give you another verse, Daniel chapter 12 and verse 1, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." There's a great time of trouble. Michael stands up. We're here.

So he delivers us at the culmination of that. I'm just letting you know up front, I think the left behind - you know what it says - the first thing in the Left Behind' books? 'This is a fictitious novel.' It's a novel and people are building their theology on something that has been a very good sales position, but it's a relatively new theology. Now let me tell you why. The Bible is clear. Jesus comes like a thief, right? We all agree? Many people say the secret rapture is because Jesus comes like a thief and He steals away the church.

Well, listen to what the Bible says - read the whole verse. Peter 3, verse 10, it says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night;" - now what happens on that day that - when the Lord comes? - "In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise," - after Jesus comes like a thief does life go on for seven more years on earth? - "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Does it sound like goes on for seven more years after He comes like a thief? There's a lot of verses like this in the Bible, friends. I think you need to let the Bible interpret itself and we can't let bookstores and Hollywood tell us what the Bible teaches.

When Jesus came the first time, was the church ready or did they misunderstand the prophecies about Christ's coming? His own people, that had Bibles, misunderstood how He was coming so they were deceived and not ready. Has the devil changed or is it possible that he's going to try to deceive the church again about how He's coming the second time? And it's interesting, he's completely flipped it over. When He comes the first time, He came like a lamb, quietly. They were wanting a king that was going to come like a lion and destroy the Romans. Now He's coming the next time like a lion and they've got Him coming quietly. And so you've just got it switched all around again.

Alright, question #3: What other physical evidence will accompany Jesus' coming according to Scripture? Revelation 16, verse 18, "And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." It tells us there's a great earthquake unlike any other earthquake. People are going to know about that, right?

Question #4: Who will see Jesus when He comes? It tells us in Matthew 24, verse , "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory." They're going to see Him come. How many? Everybody's going to see Him come. Now I'm going to answer a question in advance. Someone's going to say, 'Pastor Doug, if the world is round and Jesus comes, how can everybody in the world see Him at the same time on a round world.' Well, it didn't say at the same time. People try and create problems that don't exist. It's saying when He comes everyone will see it. As the Lord comes and He sweeps around the circle of the Earth and He catches up the saints, everyone's going to see him - everyone alive - and the redeemed will be raptured up and taken to Heaven with Him. By the way, the word 'rapture' simply means 'be caught up' and it's just - what I'm contending is it's not a secret when they're caught up.

Revelation 1:7, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and" - it tells us - "every eye shall see Him." In Acts chapter 1, when Jesus ascends to Heaven, the disciples are gazing up into Heaven, two angels appear

and they say, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand here gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus that was taken up from you into Heaven, will come in the same way you saw Him go.' Did they see Him go? He said He's going to come in the way you saw Him go. He went up in the clouds, He's coming in the clouds. He was real when He left, He's real when he comes. They saw Him go, they'll see Him come. It's not going to be a secret.

We'll all see when Jesus comes. That's important because there's going to be many false Christs and false prophets. Alright, question #5: who will be with Jesus when he returns in the clouds? Is he coming alone? No, you can read in Matthew chapter 25, verse 31 - it tells us there, "when The Son of man shall come in his glory, and" - how many? - "All the holy angels" - it didn't say 'some.' It's not a contingent - "all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." How many angels are there? Well. Let's just do some speculating. Someone wrote in - we appreciate your Bible questions, I saw one question it said, 'do we have guardian angels?' The word guardian angel doesn't really appear in the Bible but Jesus says, 'their angels' - speaking about children - 'their angels do always behold the face of my Father in Heaven, implying that angels are assigned to people - at least children - and it seems to say that every idle word that we speak is somehow recorded - there might even be recording angels.

And now there's about seven billion people in the world and so you've got seven billion guardian angels and you might even have another recording angel and there are other worlds that the Lord has made. He's got ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands and thousands of ministering spirits. Think about the glory of what one angel can do. You remember reading in the Bible where it says that the angel of the Lord went through the Syrian camp and killed 185,000 soldiers in one night? When an angel came and rolled away the stone from the tomb of Jesus, the Roman guard fell down as though they were dead they were so overwhelmed with terror - one angel! Can you imagine if the heavens are filled with every angel that God has and they're no longer veiling their glory. Do you think you're going to need a friend to call you the next day and say, 'Did you see it?' 'See what?' 'Jesus and all the angels came yesterday. Did you get it?' No, nobody's going to be surprised by that. Everyone is going to know. Christ said, 'It'll be like lightning going from one side of the sky to the other.

Question #6: What will the brightness of Jesus' coming do to the living wicked? Now we know the saved are caught up - they meet the Lord in the air. You read in 2 Thessalonians 1:7 and 8, "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God." You can also read the next verse in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 8 it says, "And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness" - what destroys them? - "The brightness of His coming." So, is it bright when Jesus comes? Everybody's going to know it.

What will happen to the righteous who are dead at Jesus' coming? So we found out what's going to happen to the wicked. Thessalonians 4:16, it tells us - and this verse is very clear. Matter of fact, I recommend you read that whole chapter - "The dead in Christ shall rise first." So not only are the living caught up, the dead in Christ come. When Jesus comes there's a resurrection. Does it sound like a secret if all the cemeteries break open?

Question #8: At this point, what will happen to the living and resurrected saints? The dead in Christ are caught up first - now don't miss that, that comes up later. How many resurrections are there? Obviously where you've got a first you at least have a second, right? It's a sequential number - and the dead in Christ rise first. 'Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection' - it says in Revelation 20 - what happens to the living and resurrected saints? You read in 1 Corinthians 15, verses 52 and 53, "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible" - these bodies that get old and die - "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." When Jesus comes we receive glorified, immortal bodies and so we're transformed in the twinkling of an eye. We're caught up and we meet the living saints in the air and Jesus takes us back to glory. Behind Him is

left destruction. The elements melt with fervent heat. So the theory that life goes on for another several years after Jesus comes in glory, is not biblical.

Question #9: After being changed, what will happen to the righteous? So you read again - continue on here in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 - it gives us more information - it says, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up" - that's where you get the word 'rapture' - it means to be caught up - "together with them" - the resurrected saints - "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." Now don't miss that. Meet the Lord where? In the air.

We're going to talk more about this, but a lot of false prophets and false Christs out there. You know right away if anybody shows up or knocks on your door - they, you know appear somewhere in the world and they say that they are Jesus - if they're touching the ground they're lying. Because it doesn't tell us anywhere that Jesus' feet touch the ground. We meet Him in the air. We are caught up to meet him. He said, 'I go to prepare a place for you' - right? John chapter 14 - 'and if I go prepare a place, I'll come again, receive you unto Myself that where I am' - where I'm at - My Father's house - 'I'm taking you back there.' He's just coming - we're caught up to meet Him in the air. He doesn't need to walk around down here. It's one of the sure ways to determine a false Christ.

Question #10: What solemn warning does Jesus give about his second coming? If you read in Matthew chapter 24, when the disciples came and they said, 'What will be the sign of these things? Destruction of Jerusalem - signs of Your coming in the end of the world - two or three times in that chapter Jesus said, 'There'll be many false prophets and false Christs. Beware of the false prophets - false Christs.

Many will arise and say, 'I am Christ' or 'Here is Christ' or 'There is Christ.' By the way, if you want to study these things yourself, you might jot down these chapters real quick: Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 17, Luke 21 - those are the principle places where Jesus Himself tells about His return. You just read that for yourself and you see if it sounds like a secret when Jesus comes. You just read it as Jesus said it and see what you think. I think it'll be pretty clear. Oh, I know what somebody's thinking right now. 'What about that verse, Pastor Doug, that says 'Two women are grinding in the mill, one is taken, one is left.' 'Two men are working in the field, one is taken, one is left.' 'Two men are sleeping in a bed, one is' - what does that mean? That sounds like maybe a secret rapture. You write it down. We'll talk about that and make it one of our questions - maybe tomorrow. This question is 'What solemn warning does Jesus give about his second coming?' 'Watch out for false Christs.'

You know, on our weekly radio program, Pastor Ross and I always start out with an amazing fact and one amazing fact that I actually learned from Pastor Ross was about Otto Witte. Back in 1913, many of the Eastern European nations got their independence. Among them was Albania and they were able to, basically, pick their own king. Well they wanted to pick Halim Eddine, who was actually in Turkey - he was a prince in Turkey - they said, 'We want him to be our king.' This was back before internet and television, photograph, radio - or they had photographs, they didn't have radio - and many of them didn't know what he looked like. So all of a sudden they got a telegram from Turkey and it said, 'King Eddine is coming and he's going to welcome you.' And the people were just ecstatic. And so out of the carriage the king stood and he was tall and wore a uniform - long sword - looked dignified and they were so excited. And he told them that he had come and he was delighted to reign over them and, matter of fact, he was going to lead them in a battle against Belgrade.

And they were ecstatic as they hated the people there. And they had a coronation service and they pronounced him king and they showered him with gifts and they put him in their palace and five days later they got another telegram from Turkey and it said, 'Prince Eddine has never left Turkey. We don't know who this individual is, but he is not the king.' They thought it was suspicious when they said, 'what is your royal name?' During the coronation. He said, 'Otto the First.' They said, 'Otto? That's not a Muslim name. That's a German name.'

Well, when they went to arrest him, he had already gotten wind of what was going on. He fled the country. He had pulled off one of the greatest masquerades in history, being coronated and living like a king for a few days, he was a German circus performer. You can read about Otto Witte. And he slipped away. He couldn't even read or write and he was able to pull off - convince a whole nation that he was their king. I can tell you, the devil's a lot smarter than Otto and he's going to be fooling the world. You see, the devil wants to impersonate Christ. There's - a lot of crazy people pretend to be Jesus but I'm concerned, especially when Satan will do his masterpiece of deception and claim to be Jesus.

Matthew 24, now we're getting into some of the answers for question #10. Matthew 24, verse 5 - Jesus has warned us - "For many shall come in My name, saying, 'I am Christ;' and" - and do what? - Deceive a few? A few? No, many. Many is the majority. Most people in the world will be deceived by the antichrist, isn't that right? That's why Jesus said, 'Straight is the gate that leads to life and few find it.' I'm glad you're here, friends, because in the Bible you're going to find the way of life. Another verse: Matthew 24:24 and - Jesus warned us - "for there shall arise" - here He goes - "false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders;" - some of these false Christs today are just kooks, but He said some of them will have signs and wonders - "inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect..." The Bible tells us in Revelation that three unclean spirits come out of the mouth of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet and they go forth to the Kings of the earth. They are lying spirits performing signs and wonders.

So there's going to be real supernatural powers some of these false Christs are going to have. And then, we all know about Jim Jones and David Koresh and this character Marshall Applewhite who told everybody that he was some reincarnation of Christ and his followers were so sincere they sold everything and they committed mass suicide, thinking when this comet went by they were going to get caught up into a spaceship hiding behind the comet. And people believed that. These are just crazy people. I'm saying that some of these individuals that think they're Christ.

When the devil really uses his cunning and his power, "If they shall say unto you, behold, ... he is in the secret chambers; believe it not." When they say on CNN or the news some glorious being has appeared in the Middle East - 'He's performing miracles, he looks like Jesus, he's healing' - should we believe it? I met somebody once that claimed to be Jesus and I wouldn't have thought too much about it, but I was all by myself living in a cave up in the mountains and it was a little unnerving at the time. I was a baby Christian and I just started reading the Bible. I knew a little bit, but I didn't know very much and I lived by myself like a hermit up there. My cave was right by the creek so people hiking up this canyon kind of had to go by my cave.

And into my yard, one day, came this guy hiking. He was about six feet tall, even build, brown hair down to his shoulders, beard, hazel eyes. He sat and talked to me for a little while at my campfire and he - perfectly serious - he said to me, 'I am Jesus.' Now I've met some Spanish friends named Jesus before and I wasn't sure he meant that's just the name - and I don't remember exactly how I asked him and he said, 'I am Jesus.' And that's really - it's kind of scary because, first of all, I had all these range of emotions going through my mind and I thought, 'I'm up here in the mountains with this lunatic and what do you do? He's here just sitting - me and him up in - he's in my cave - that was my home. How do you kick a guy out of your cave, especially on a public trail? And then I thought, 'What if it is Jesus? I don't want to insult him. You know, I mean all kinds of things go through your mind.

And so I said, 'If that's true, why did you say in the Bible that you're coming in the clouds?' He said, 'Well that's absolutely true. That's how I'm coming for most people - for the general public - but I'm appearing to certain special people individually.' He had a clever answer for everything. And I, you know, I was nice to the guy - I was just tormented. I'm thinking, you know, should I just say, 'Get out of here?' Or maybe he just needs a little help and if I'm nice to him, I can help him. And I thought, 'Maybe it is Jesus. I've got to be careful.' And so all this was going through my mind. But he stayed in my cave for two and a half

days. He was a slob. He ate all my food.

He didn't do any work. I finally had to evict Jesus from my cave. And then a few days later I saw him walking around in Palm Springs - I was down in town - and he had found someone following him around. There was this tall hippie that said, 'Oh, this is Jesus.' He found his first apostle. And then, a few days later, I saw him again on the streets and he had one of his front teeth knocked out.

He got, I don't know, he offended somebody. And I felt so much better because I know Jesus has all His teeth, right? So - so there really are people out there, but I'm worried about the ones that really have power that are going to deceive.

Question #11: What will prevent the righteous from being deceived? How are we going to know? You know, when I was studying with this fellow up in the cave, I fortunately had enough Scripture he couldn't answer and I noticed he was kind of dancing around and I thought, 'He doesn't know the Bible. There's something wrong here.' Isaiah 8, verse 20, it says, "To the law and to the testimony:" - that's the law and the prophets - the Word of God - "if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light" - how much light? - "No light in them." Keep in mind that the devil - does he know how to quote the Bible? And there's a lot of false prophets even in the religious world. We all know that. And some of them are just out begging for money and they know how to quote the Bible. And so you need to know, is everything adding up? Because anybody can quote a little bit of Scripture. A lot of atheists know how to quote a few verses, but if they're not going according to the entire Word of God, there's something wrong.

Question #12: Would it be safe to go and to see a false Christ? Yeah, someone says, 'hey, you've got to come out in the desert. There's this guy meeting out there.' What does the Bible say? Matthew chapter 24, verse 26, Jesus said, "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, behold, he is in the desert; go not forth." If someone calls you up and says, 'You've got to check this out, Jesus is on TV right now. Go to channel such and such.' I wouldn't even turn the channel and look because the devil knows how to use hypnosis and TV has actually been proven to be a very effective means of hypnosis. Advertising agencies have been using it that way to make you buy things you don't need for years, right? Watch all these commercials - you're buying stuff you don't need or want. You're sort of being programmed.

Question #13: What can we know about the time of Jesus' return? Matthew 24, verse 36, it tells us there, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my father only." Now someone write down the question - Jesus said He didn't even know the day and the hour of His coming. Does He know now? Write that down, we'll talk about that. But Jesus was pretty clear. He said, 'Not even the Son, but My father only.' So is God the Father keeping a secret from Jesus? I'm not going to tell you. You write it down, we'll talk about that.

Another one - Matthew 24:33, it says, "When ye shall see all these things," - we may not know the day and the hour, but Christ said - "Know that it is near, even at the doors." So there's an array - there's a bouquet of signs that God gives us in His Word and as these signs begin to line up we can know that the time is near. Does the Lord want that day to overtake us as a thief? Thessalonians, chapter 5 says, 'You are not children of the night, you are children of the day.' That day should not overtake you as a thief. It is going to overtake the rest of the world as a thief. When the Bible says He's coming as a thief, it does not mean that it's going to surprise the church. We should know - we may not know the day or the hour, but we're going to know when it's near. He wants us to lift up our heads and look.

Now let's look at some of the signs very quickly. Jesus said, among the things that will happen, He said there's going to be pestilence in diverse places. Have you seen anything in the news lately about plagues and pestilence? This Ebola scare. I've been in Western Africa and I'll just tell you. I, frankly, think they're going to get the Ebola thing under control. It's a tragedy how many people are dying there. And it's just getting the sanitation things under control, but really, the kind of pestilence I'm thinking about is what

happened in 1918, 1919 - most of you were not alive back then, and that's when they had a killer flu. Between 30 and 50 million people died. We're talking now thousands in Africa.

The plagues that Jesus was talking about are pandemics - millions are dying. He said there'll be war and rumor of war. There'll be natural disasters - and we see these things - matter of fact, this Mount Ontake, just about a month before our seminar here there was a volcano exploded in Japan. Did you remember hearing about that? I think they've, so far, recovered 56 bodies. But that's really nothing compared to what happened during the tsunami in Japan and what happened during the tsunami and earthquake in Indonesia.

I've been there on the beach in Madras. I've been to Indonesia and there are millions of people there and we have no idea the scope of suffering that these things brought to those parts of the world, not to mention the earthquake in Haiti - seven on the Richter scale. Do you know - let me just give you a quote. I got this from - last week ago - the Geologic Society of America - let me read this to you. "Between 2004 and 2014, 18 earthquakes with magnitudes of 8.0 or more rattled subduction zones around the globe. That's an increase of 265 percent over the average rate of the previous century." This is not coming from a religious group. Even those who are studying what's happening to the earth are saying things are happening quicker. Now Jesus talks about His second coming being like birth pains. The whole world groans and travails waiting for deliverance.

And you know that when a lady is great with child and she's expecting, you don't know the day and the hour always, do you? Unless you're planning on inducing - the old fashioned way, they said 'When the apple's ripe, it'll drop.' And one of the signs was all of a sudden she'd get a sharp pain, hopefully after nine months, and then twenty minutes later another one. And you might call the doctor and say, 'Oh, I think I'm having a baby.' He'll say, 'How far apart are your pains?' So many dear couples - their first baby - they'll make ten trips to the hospital before the baby ever shows up. 'This is it.' He says, 'No it's not. Go back.' But when the - they say, 'How far apart are they?' When they become closer together and more intense, you know something's getting ready to be delivered. And what we're seeing happen in the world today is an increase of frequency and intensity.

There have always been wars, but we haven't always had nuclear weapons. There've always been plagues, but we've not always had the means, like airplanes, to spread them around the world in a week. There've always been a lot of these things but - let me give you another sign. This I just read in 'National Geographic' I think three weeks ago. I dropped it into my notes. Do you know half of the world's wildlife has been lost in the past forty years? Half of the wildlife in the world - compared to forty years ago is gone. God'll destroy those that destroy the Earth. Immorality and violence is another sign, Jesus said, in the last days. We are concerned, of course, about wars and rumors of wars, and we certainly have that, but every day in America more youth die in gang violence than fighting in foreign wars. That's pretty frightening. You don't hear much about it in the news, but it's a fact. And then, Jesus said, 'Evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse.'

You know, one reason that I think Jesus is coming - there are many reasons I believe He's coming soon - is Jesus - Daniel chapter 12 said, 'Many'll run to and fro and knowledge will increase.' You're living in a generation now where knowledge has increased more than in all of the history of man combined, in just this last twenty years. There are probably still people sitting here listening to me right now that used to ride horses to get around. They used to read by kerosene light - I did, actually, at one time. Remember when there wasn't anything like a television? Some of you are so young, you don't remember what a VCR is, let alone an 8-track.

Look at what's happened to technology in one generation. Daniel said in Daniel 12, 'Many will run to and fro and knowledge will increase.' More knowledge - the internet is sort of a tree of good and evil. It can do a lot of good and it does a lot of evil - and as a pastor, I deal with a lot of people that struggle with pornography and it's tearing families apart. In addition, I know it's politically incorrect, but if I had told

you forty years ago that we would be saying there's no difference between a man and woman and marriage could be one man with one man, one man with one woman, two women or one man with four wives. Haven't we seen that happening in our culture? Is that what God described as his plan? Jesus said, Luke 17:28, "...as it was in the days of lot...even thus shall it be in the day when The Son of man is revealed." What was it like in the days of lot? Blatant immorality, unabashed, unashamed - clamoring for acceptance and attention. And He said that's one of the signs.

Look at the population of the world. Wow, I've been to India and China. I'll just tell you there's a whole lot of people there. Matter of fact, I've come back from China and I think - 300 million - North America? That's nothing. You go to a country with 1.3 billion people. Shanghai - I was in Shanghai this year. Million people in that city. I grew up in New York City and it was like driving in New York City forever and you're still there. You couldn't get out. It was amazing. They estimate - I remember when there were 3 billion people in the world. Some of you remember that. And it just continues to grow and now we're at 7 billion. By the year 2050 there'll be 9.5 billion and we're certainly running short on certain resources.

Political instability - another sign. Russia seems to be grasping more power. There's terrible strife in the Middle East with a number of Islamic countries. And you just look at the turmoil in the world around us. 'The nations were angry. The time of your wrath has come' - it says in Revelation. Do you know the world spends, right now, over 100 million dollars an hour on soldiers, ammunition, and war machines? Jesus said there'll be wars and rumors of wars. And I don't want to frighten you, but you know those nuclear weapons that we supposedly scaled back? They're still out there and we have great concern.

Not only is Iran trying to develop a weapon - we all know that - but what if some of these renegade or rogue countries or powers like Isis - if they get a weapon and they could just fire it at Israel, do you think that they'll hesitate? You see the brutality of what they'll do on television to an innocent person? And it just makes you shudder to think. It's only the grace of God that's keeping the world from imploding right now. It says, in Revelation, His angels are holding back the winds of strife.

Question #14: What will the angels do at Jesus' second coming? Matthew 24, verse 31, "His angels...shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other." They are going to gather them together and we'll be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

Question #15: Since we are living just before Jesus' second coming, how should we relate to this solemn, and this glorious event? Should we be afraid of Christ's coming? The Bible says it's a blessed event. Jesus tells us don't wait until the last minute to get ready - like you do with your taxes. You don't want to wait - some people try and figure out what the date is and they think, you know, I'm going to live for the devil until the last minute and then I'll get ready. No, if you love the Lord you don't do that. It says in Matthew 24:44, "Therefore be ye also ready:" - Jesus said - "for in such an hour as ye think not The Son of man cometh." It might surprise people. Such an hour as you do not think.

Question #16: How will people be rewarded at Jesus' second coming? Answer: Revelation chapter 22, verse 12 - He said, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." We're saved by grace but we're rewarded by our works because your works will illustrate if the grace of God is really alive in your heart.

Question #17: What will the wicked say when Jesus returns? Now stay with me. This is a long verse. Revelation chapter 6, verse 15, "And the Kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne: ... For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?'" That's the big event in history, friends.

Jesus is coming and the question is 'Who will be prepared for His coming?' He wants everybody to be ready. The Bible says God is not willing that any should perish. The Lord who would have all men to be saved. Revelation 22 said, 'Whosoever will let him come and take the water of life freely' - right? God

doesn't want anyone to perish. Jesus said, whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

He wants you - that's why you're here - that's why you're listening or watching. He wants you to know He's coming back. And if Jesus is coming soon, what should be more important than preparing for eternity? Wouldn't that be the priority? What are the righteous going to say when Jesus comes? Isaiah 25, verse 9 - they're not going to be sad, they're going to be thrilled with great glory. They'll say "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us:" Do you believe He can save you, friends? You can be ready. It goes on to say, "We will rejoice and be glad in His salvation."

So why is Jesus coming - to destroy everybody? What is the purpose of His second coming? John 14, verse 3 - He says, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself;" He's coming back for us. The wicked are destroyed by the brightness of His coming, but His main reason for coming - He says, 'I've gone to prepare a place for you and I will 'receive you unto Myself, that where I am, you might be also.' We will live with God. Isn't that wonderful? What a joy, friends. He wants us to be ready. He's not going to forget about us.

You know, I love history and one of the great stories of history was the great raid that took place in 1945 at a P.O.W. camp in the Philippines called Cabanatuan. There, a number of soldiers, as well as civilians, had been imprisoned by the Japanese for years and they had been starving - dying from malnutrition. They were tortured in the camps. And as MacArthur was landing with his troops in the Philippines, they were afraid that the Japanese would execute all the P.O.W.s before they could be liberated so they asked the army rangers for volunteers who would be willing to go in and to redeem and to save these people. A hundred army rangers along with some Philippine volunteer guerillas, they went and they stormed the camp at night and they effected this great liberation and they saved virtually all of the P.O.W.s - they put their lives on the line.

The whole Exodus story is how God saves His people from prison. Jesus came to set the captives free. Do you think He's going to leave us in this world that is just festering with sin? He said, 'I will come again.' He came the first time. Is He going to come again the second time? Do you want to be ready, friends? I want you to pray about it as John sings. Then we'll close with prayer together.

Oh the marketplace is empty,
No more traffic in the streets,
All the builder's tools are silent,
No more time to harvest wheat.
Busy housewives cease their labor,
In the courtrooms no debate,
Work on Earth is all suspended
As the King comes through the gate.

I can hear the chariots rumble,
I can see the marching throng,
The flurry of God's trumpets
Spell the end of sin and wrong.
Wrinkled robes are now unfolding,
Heaven's grandstands all in place,
Heaven's choir is now assembled,
Start to sing 'Amazing Grace.'

Oh the King is coming,
Yes the King is coming,
I just heard the trumpets sounding
And now His face I see.

Oh the King, yes He is coming,
The King is coming,
Praise God, yes praise God, Praise God He's coming for me.

Amen. Amen. Thank you, John. Thank you, Kelly. Do you believe it, friends? I don't know about you but, as they say, I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired. I want the Lord to come. And Jesus never breaks His Word.

He says Heaven and Earth will pass away, My word will not pass away. He came on time the first time, He's going to come on time the second time. He wants you to be ready. And don't forget this simple truth: He could come for us before He comes for everybody else, if our lives end. So don't wait until you figure out on a timeline when you think the Second Coming is, He wants you to be ready now because every breath, every heartbeat is a gift from God.

This life is temporary. We all know it, friends, amen? I want to be ready, how about you? Why don't you bow your heads with me and let's ask Him. Father in Heaven, we just thank You that You called us to be ready. We thank You for this series and the hearts that You're touching. And we pray as we gather together and study Your Word, that You'll work miracles in our lives.

Bless each of these people. Be with them in their homes and their families and their health. Help us be ready right now by accepting Jesus in our lives - by surrendering to You that we can look up when You come, with joy. We pray in His name, amen.