

# Nehemiah 3

Sunday 8/31/2003

Anyway, you probably will be part of it. All right, let's get into the Bible. Nehemiah chapter 3. It's probably good that we don't have any visitors today because this message is for us. Notice I didn't say "you," I said "us." I don't have any agenda. I just know what this message is about here. We're building a church here, and when you build a church, there are some things the church has to emphasize. Churches don't emphasize it anymore.

One of the things the church needs to emphasize is preaching on hell. You don't hear many—I'm not talking about literally, I'm talking about, quote unquote, supposedly Baptist churches—you don't hear any preaching on hell anymore. I haven't preached on hell yet, but when we get to that point where we're going to, we'll preach on it. There are certain things you have to emphasize, and a lot of people don't do it today; pastors don't do it today because it turns people off. We live in a society that doesn't want to think about hell. Of course, you better think about it because if you're saved, that's great. But how about your friends you work with? There are always people around you that are unsaved. So there are things that we have to emphasize.

Today, I want to preach on something that the Bible tells us we have to emphasize. In fact, in the gates, last week we talked about the Watergate. We talked about the Watergate being the preaching ministry of this church and it being the central program of this church. The teaching of the Bible is everything that we do. That's why I don't—I mean, there are some churches that make a bigger deal about the baked beans and the chicken than they do the preaching. We don't care about that. I don't care about anything other than the preaching of the Word of God. Everything else can change. Everything else can fluctuate. Everything else doesn't matter to me. We do it because we're doing God's business, but the preaching of the Word of God cannot change. The central ministry of this church has to be the Watergate.

We talked about that last week, what it produces. It produces the right attitude toward the Word of God. That was your second test; I gave you two tests. You're going to get the third one today.

1. The first test was, how do you know that you're growing spiritually? How do you know that you're making progress in the Word of God on a daily basis? Because that's tough. Well, you know because when you hear good, hard preaching, it just kind of puts it to you. Good, hard preaching really just kind of lets you have it in a good way. You walk out of here saying, "Boy, that was tough, but I appreciate that. I needed that." That was good. That shows you how you're growing because the Bible says that He is the love of the honeycomb. Even the bitter things are sweet.
2. Then we gave you test two: love the book. How do you know you love the Word of God? Well, we know you love the Word of God when you can't leave home without it. We talked about the little tool deal, and you know how whatever you do for life, for a living, if you leave it at home and you try to go do your work, how it ruins your whole day. Well, you've got to be the same way with the Word of God. That Bible ought to be something you can't leave. If I leave the house in the morning and I don't say goodbye, kiss my wife goodbye, my whole day is screwed up. I mean, it's just something like that. So you've got to have those things, and the Bible ought to be just like that.

## I. The Horse Gate and the Eastern Gate

We're going to give you test three today. Back in Nehemiah chapter 3, verses 28 and 29, he says this: "From above the horse gate..." Father, we thank You and praise You for all You do for us. We pray, Lord, as we look at these two gates today, that You'll help us understand all that You have for us. We love You. We ask You, Father, to take the Word of God, make it real to our hearts and our lives. Challenge us, Lord. Build us as a church. Build us into a unity of one. And, Lord, we'll be careful to give You all the honor and praise. In Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

Today, we're going to talk about two more gates. These two gates go together, and they go together because they stand for, without a doubt, the most important doctrine in the Word of God. Now, I don't lessen any doctrine or teaching in the Word of God, but God puts emphasis on certain things. One of the things I've learned in life as a Christian—this is a good little rule, you want to write this down someplace—never emphasize something more than God emphasizes it. Never de-emphasize something more than God de-emphasizes it. Always look at the thing and see what God says about it. If He emphasizes something more than anything else, then you need to know that this is very important. This is the doctrine we're going to talk about today because the Horse Gate and the Eastern Gate represent the most important doctrine in the Bible, and that is the doctrine of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without a doubt, the doctrine of the Second Coming is the most important doctrine in the Word of God. It's the doctrine that really everything focuses around.

In fact, I don't know if you caught this last week. I didn't say anything about this last week. I thought I'd give you this this week and see if some of you caught it. Last week we talked about the Watergate. Now, the Eastern Gate and the Horse Gate are two different gates, and they represent for us two ways into this city. The Horse Gate is for us; we'll talk about that today. The Eastern Gate is for the Lord; we'll probably get into that next week. But these two gates are side by side, and they represent the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## II. The Watergate and the Eastward Gaze

I want you to see this: last week we talked about the Watergate. Did you catch this? Look over here in Nehemiah 3:26. It says:

*Nehemiah 3:26*

*Moreover the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto the place over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.*

It is the only gate that is mentioned that says "toward the east" because the preaching of the Word of God, the preaching ministry of this church, always should look toward the east. You realize when they bury dead people today, they bury them facing east. You realize there is not a graveyard in this country where they're not buried with their head facing east. You know why? Now, there's no rule of thumb in the state of Missouri that says, "Oh, dead people have got to be facing east." It's one of those things that man doesn't understand why he does it, but man does it

because the Bible says when the Lord comes back, He's coming from the east. So everybody's buried, whether they believe the Bible or not—oh, you wait a week, get a little bit into this, and you'll see some things about what the Bible does with people that don't believe it—but whether they believe it or not, everybody that is buried, they're buried facing east because when the Lord comes back, they're going to meet Him in a good sense or a bad sense. But as the old game used to play, when we used to play hide-and-seek and you used to get out there and hide, you know what the guy used to say? "Ready or not, here I come." And ready or not, here He comes.

Without a doubt, the most important doctrine in all the Bible is the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ. That's why the Watergate, the Bible says, is "toward the east" because the preaching of this ministry should always have as its basic doctrine and its basic format and its basic purpose is that God's got a plan, and that plan is built around the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### III. The Theme of the Bible: A Kingdom and a King

I don't know what you know about the Bible. We've got a lot of people here that know a lot about the Bible, and we've got some media Christians who know quite a bit about the Bible. We always have new people that don't know a whole lot about the Bible, but they want to learn, and that's great. That's what we're here for. That's why I try to break these things down so everybody can get it. As always, all week long, if you want to spend some time with me coming through and help me break down my lessons on Sunday or what we talked about on Thursday night Bible study, I'm available. I'll meet with you, go to lunch with you, meet you at the office, whatever you want to do, come over to my place, however you want to do it. We'll sit down and we'll talk about the Bible to help you understand what the Word of God says. That's what it's all about.

But let me say this: I don't know what you know about the Bible, but the Second Coming of Christ is the theme of the Bible. Now, I know that people today—I read all kinds of books—people say, "Well, the theme of the Bible is salvation," or "the theme of the Bible is God," or "the theme of the Bible is Christ." Well, there are characters in the Bible, and certainly salvation is a very important part of the Word of God. But let me just say this: that's not the theme of the Bible. The theme of the Bible is a kingdom. The theme of the Bible is a kingdom and a king. The scope of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation is about that kingdom.

Now, for us, you see, as Christians, I mean, let's be honest, the most important day on my calendar is the day I got saved. Without a doubt, the most important day on my calendar is the day I got saved. I look at that day and I go back to Calvary, the first coming of Christ, and I think, "Wow, if Christ wouldn't have come and died, I could have never been saved." So for me, that is the most important day. So human nature is such that we think that that's the most important day for us, it must be the most important day for God. Not true. I'm not saying that God doesn't put a lot of importance on His first coming. Certainly He does. I'm not saying that the first coming of Christ isn't important. It is. And to me, it's the most important day. But let me tell you something: it's not the most important day in God's calendar.

No, no, God has a plan. God's plan is that the Lord is coming back. When He came the first time, He came to present Himself as the King of the Jews. He came, the Bible says, to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to give Himself to this world to be the King. And what did they do? They killed Him. They crucified Him. They spit on Him. They nailed Him to a Roman cross. They stripped Him naked. They took the divine Son of God. They took God incarnate in the flesh, and they killed Him. Now, that's great for me because through His death, I got eternal life. But that's not God's day. God's not overly interested in the day His Son came down and died on the cross other than to save mankind. The day that God's looking for is the day His Son walks through that Eastern Gate and sits down on the throne of Jerusalem and is crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords. That's the day.

Now, we as Christians, we get short-sighted. We think that because salvation, and we always—our two biggest days as Christians are Christmas and Easter, all dealing with the first coming of Christ—we make them such a great spectacle and we make them such a great thing that we think that that must be what God's excited about. Well, I'm not saying that God wasn't excited about saving you and me. But I'm saying God is more excited about, and the theme of the Bible goes beyond that. The theme of the Bible is the day that Christ comes down and goes into Jerusalem and sits down on that throne. That's the day.

All the way through the Bible, there's a kingdom, there's a crown, and there's a throne. That throne is in Jerusalem. All through the Bible, there have been two men that are after that crown. One of them rightly deserves it, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the other is the devil himself who doesn't deserve it but wants it. All history, basic history lesson, all history is built around that concept. That's why the nation of Israel, that little piece of ground the size of Texas, Jerusalem, has been the battleground down through history and will remain the battleground till the real King comes back and sits down and is crowned the King of Kings. Two gates: Horse Gate, the Eastern Gate. One for you, one for me, one for the King.

#### IV. The Horse Gate: Our Return with Christ

Now, take your Bibles and turn to Revelation chapter 19 because we want to look at this gate. This gate, the Horse Gate, I want to talk to you about. First of all, I want to take the Second Coming of Christ and bring it into two perspectives. I want to show you what it's going to mean for you and for me. Next week, we'll talk about what it's going to mean for God. When we come away from it, you'll have all the information on the Second Coming of Christ that you need to really figure it out in the Bible. But I want you to turn with me to Revelation chapter 19. Let's go back here and let's look at this great chapter here. I want to talk to you today about the Horse Gate, the gate that the horses went in. Do you like riding horses? Have you ever wanted to ride a horse? Well, you're going to get your chance if you're saved. We're going to talk about that today.

*Revelation 19:11-16*

*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.*

*His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.*

*And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.*

*And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*

*And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*

*And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

I want you to know, my friend, that the Bible says that "I saw heaven opened." Now, in the book of Revelation, heaven opens twice. You're probably not going to get this written down fast enough, but I'm going to give you a little basic outline of the book of Revelation. You get the tape, you can go back and put it up. You say, "I don't have money for a tape." You come and see me, and I'll buy you a tape. This is that important. But I want you to know this: heaven opens twice. Heaven opens once in Revelation chapter 4. Heaven opens a second time in Revelation chapter 19, verse 11.

Now, the book of Revelation looks like it's a hard book, but it's not. The book of Revelation is a book that shows you the events from the church age all the way into eternity.

> In Revelation 1, 2, and 3, you're going to find the word "church" mentioned 21 times. You're going to find 7 churches, and it's going to talk about the Spirit of God talking to those churches in the first 3 chapters. We know that they represent the 7 periods of church history. We know that they represent the time period from Christ up through the rapture of the church. We find John talking in the Spirit and speaking to these churches.

> Then in Revelation 4, heaven opens. A voice, like a trumpet, says, "Come up hither." You never find the word "church" again in the book of Revelation. You know why? Revelation 4 is a picture of the rapture.

> Revelation 1, 2, 3: picture of the church age.

> Revelation 4: rapture of the church.

> Revelation 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18: all pictures of the tribulation period.

> You come to Revelation chapter 19, verse 11, what happens? Heaven opens again. This time, somebody comes down: Second Coming of Christ.

> Revelation 20: the millennium.

> Revelation 21: new heavens and a new world.

> Revelation 22: eternity.

The whole book of Revelation laid out for you, just like that. That's all that it is. First 3 chapters: the church age. Chapter 4: heaven opens and somebody goes up. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, right up to chapter 18: all pictures of the tribulation period. In chapter 19, heaven opens up again. This time, somebody doesn't go up, somebody comes down: Second Coming of Christ.

And in 20, the millennium, right in order. 21, new heavens and new worlds, right in order. And in 22, out into eternity. Everything you need right there.

But I want to talk to you about that verse where it says, "And I saw heaven open." The Lord's coming back, and I'm going to come back with Him. The Bible says, "I saw heaven open and it talks about a white horse." "Behold a white horse." That white horse, my friend, is the Lord Jesus Christ. We're going to save a lot of that till next week, but I want to tell you something: when He comes back, I'm coming back with Him. When He comes back, it's going to be the glorious day on God's calendar. It is so prevalent, and it is so unbelievably the number one doctrine in the Bible that I'm telling you, there are over 500 references in the Old Testament alone to the Second Coming of Christ. For every verse you give me on salvation, on this or that, whatever subject, for every verse you give me on whatever subject you pick, I'll give you 10 verses on the Second Coming of Christ. They are 10 to 1 in the Bible. Without a doubt, it is the greatest doctrine in all the Word of God.

## V. The Pervasive Influence of the Second Coming Doctrine

When I come down here, it says, "And I saw heaven open and a white horse." Let me tell you something. The doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ has made it such an important doctrine. It has made such an impact on this world, and it will make an impact that every writer, every movie plot, every book you ever read, anything in this life that Hollywood comes up with or unregenerate man comes up with, let me just tell you something. When I say the Bible is the Word of God, I don't think you understand what I'm saying. I'm meaning this book governs everything that takes place in this life. It doesn't matter if you believe it or not. An unsaved man can say, "I don't believe in hell." So what? He can say, "I don't believe in God." So what? This book binds everything in life, in heaven and earth, because it is absolute truth in everything. Everything has to operate from this book, whether you believe it or not. It doesn't make any difference, and sometimes it gets masked, you can't see it clearly, but let me tell you something. If you just step back and look at the Bible for what it is, everything in this world runs by it.

When I say the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ is the most important teaching in the Bible, I'm not just saying that. Everything in this world, whether a man is saved or unsaved, what he does, he has to have a basis of truth. It may only be 1% truth, but he has to have a basis of truth in what he does. When he gets that basis of truth, it's always going to come from here. White horse rider, that white horse rider has been the subject of every plot, every book that's ever been written down through history. I don't care what movie you see. I don't care what book you read. You know what you've got? You've got a good guy who's always associated with white. You've got a bad guy who's always associated with black. And you've got a woman who is always the victim. You know what happens? The bad guy steals the woman, ties her on the railroad track. The good guy is kind of out of the scene someplace. Everybody thinks this poor woman is going to get run over. The old guy there in a black hat with a black suit, twirling his mustache, laughing because he's dead. And what happens? Right at the end of the movie, here comes the good guy. The white hat on a white horse. You can't get away from it.

I don't know what cable company you've got, but on the western channels down in the end, like 160, you can go back there and you can still get Hopalong Cassidy, Gene Autry, Dale and Roy Evans. You know what I'm talking about. Just wanted to see how old you were. Who knew what was going on in life? Hey, they were made back in the 50s. I have seen, now I have seen, Hopalong Cassidy movies at the end. Hoppy came out with a Bible and sat there and said, "Look, boys and girls, the Bible's the Word of God. Hoppy believes the Bible. You want to obey mom and dad? You ought to do what's right." I've seen that on television. You don't see it today. All those guys were saved. Gene Autry was saved. Roy Rogers was saved. Hopalong Cassidy was saved. I don't know about Tom, but forget him. But my point is this: they all were good guys. They all rode white horses.

The Lone Ranger. Now there's a case study for you. Who came up with that idea? You've got a guy on a white suit with a white hat on a white horse. He's always showing up just in the nick of time. He wears a mask. He's a mystery man. He comes in there. You know what? He's moral. I've never seen him kiss anybody other than his horse in my whole life. You never notice he never killed anybody? No. Bad guy got on the black horses with a black hat, and they're riding off. He comes charging up there, and Tonto says, "Oh, they went that way." You know what he does? He pulls out his gun, shoots up in the sky. It ricochets off a tree. It hits a steel beam. Comes down and hits the guy on the arm. Doesn't even kill him. Every time he shows up, riding in the nick of time on his white horse. A mystery man with a mask. He rides off into the sunset. Everybody says, "Who was that masked man?" I know who he is. He's a white horse rider. He's the man that all the writings and all the books and everything.

I watched the old movie, my wife and I. Our favorite movie is The Bride of Frankenstein, made back in the 30s. I love Frankenstein. But when Frankenstein gets a bride, oh, that's a trip. Oh, it's funny. We laugh at it all the time. In fact, if it's coming on, we're going to watch it. You know, for one line. We just watch it for one line. I'm not going to tell you what line it is. But it is funny. It is hilarious. But you ever study Frankenstein? Where does that plot come from? Here's what you've got: you've got a man who's a doctor who creates life. At the end of the movie, the creation kills the creator. Christ was a great physician. He created life! But it was a monster. And the creation killed the creator.

I turn over there and I go to the bookstore. I said, "Oh, here's a good book: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Spencer Tracy made it famous back in the 40s. It's an old-time classic movie. You know the plot. Here's a man that he drinks a potion and he turns into a beast. He's out there doing all kinds of terrible things. When he comes back, he's a kind, gentle, sweet man. We look at that and I think to myself, that's Romans chapter 7. You've got two natures. One of them is a wicked, sorry nature that will do all the premeditated things. The other one is the godly nature. "Mary had a little lamb whose fleece was white as snow." Yes, she did. You can't get away from it.

I look at the Lone Ranger over there. He's riding around on a white horse, always doing good. Never killing anybody. Never being immoral. Always showing up at the nick of time and saving the day. Where'd that plot come from? Oh, by the way, he's got a counterpart. Rides a black horse. Has a black cape, black suit. He's got the right religion. He goes around, marking things. You won't beat the book. You won't beat the book. I mean, you sit down there with that television

set and the Bible, you can learn all kinds of things. Look at Revelation chapter 19, verse 11. Excuse me. "And I saw heaven open." Good guy, white. Bad guy, black suit, black hat. Woman, church, Israel. "I saw heaven open." He's coming back. The white horse rider is so prevalent in history, and the theme of the Bible is so prevalent that even an unsaved man can't write a book, make a movie, without a good guy, a bad guy, and an innocent woman. You know the theme. A good guy looks like he gets killed out of the picture. Bad guy's going to win. Got the woman tied to the railroad tracks. Got the woman locked up. At the end of the movie, here comes the hero. Oh, I'm telling you. That Bible says, "And I saw heaven open." Then a white horse rider, and look down here in Revelation 19:14: Revelation 19:14

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. That's us. That's us. That's us. That's us. I'm coming back with Him. The Horse Gate: Keeping Our Perspective Let me tell you what the Horse Gate does for you. The Horse Gate helps you keep your perspective. Because I want to tell you, in this world, you can lose your perspective. If you're not careful, you can still go to church, still read your Bible, but you come to the point where you wonder why you're here and what your purpose is. That'll never happen if the emphasis is always put around the Second Coming of Christ, the greatest doctrine in the Bible, and you realize this is a Horse Gate for you and me and the Eastern Gate for the King. Oh, those armies. That's me and you. We're coming back. We're coming back. That's what the Second Coming of Christ means to me. It makes rhyme or reason all this mess in planet Earth. It makes rhyme or reason why there's so much heartache and so much destitution and all the problems. We look at America, the great Christian nation, quote, unquote, and we look at all of the depravity and all the filth and all the ungodliness and all the throwing away the things of God, and we wonder what is happening in America. I'll tell you what's happening: we're moving right along on God's program. If you're not careful here in that, and you have to see it every day, hear it every day, smell it every day, taste it every day, you'll lose your perspective if you do not remember, He's coming back. I'm coming with Him. Romans chapter 8, that great chapter in the book of Romans that lays out the doctrine of my relationship as a Christian to the glorified body I'm going to get someday. It shows me how Christ's death on the cross in relationship gives me that body. He says, "Because I'm a Christian, because I'm saved, because you and I have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, we have a heritage. We have an inheritance." He says, "children, heirs of God, and then joint-heirs of Jesus Christ." Whatever the King gets, you and I get. We get excited about things down here, don't we? Things down here steal the glitter from the Bible, from this church, from God Himself. In moderation, everything's okay that you probably want to do in your life other than just sin. Nothing wrong with going to a ballgame. Nothing wrong with enjoying this or enjoying that. But I'm telling you, we as God's people today, trying to build a church, must understand that there is a higher calling and a higher purpose than down here in this life. It really doesn't make a difference. It isn't going to last. All that glitters is not gold. But there's coming a day when He comes back, which is the theme of the Bible, and I'm coming back with Him. Then we're going to reign with Him. Then we're going to be an heir, a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. He says in Romans 8:18, and oh, what a true statement it is: Romans 8:18

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. In light of the fact that you're going to be a joint-heir with

Christ, heir of God and His child, and get a glorified body, He says, "For the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." I look around this world, it's such a joke. The older I get, the more I like to watch the news. Three Stooges aren't on anymore. I need amusement. I look at it. What a joke. I mean, I love our president, I pray for our president, but let me tell you something, sir. If you think you're going to bring peace to the Middle East with any plan, you're wrong. They can't say, "Well, why can't one side just honor the peace treaty? Why can't the Palestinians just not kill anybody? Why do the Jews have to retaliate afterwards? Why can't they just do it?" They keep getting up after more bombings and more people killed, and everybody says, "Well, we just ask both sides to use restraint. Well, we just ask both sides to step back, breathe four deep breaths, and then just take another look at this." Let me tell you something. Figure it out. Those two boys haven't got along for 4,000 years, and they're not going to get along now. Besides that, there's somebody else that wants Jerusalem. There's a false king that wants to go in there, and he'll do everything he can to keep God's people out to put his people in. The Formula for True Peace. Peace. You ever see the formula for peace in the Bible, world peace? I'm not very smart. I don't have a degree. I'm not a politician. I don't have any great law degree, nor do I have an award for bringing world peace. Nobody's going to ever give me the Nobel Peace Award. But I've got the answer to peace. I can bring peace to this world in 15 minutes if you just listen to me. I'll charge you half of what you're paying. You're paying \$4 billion a month. Give me \$2 billion a month, and I'll end it for you. You'll still have \$2 billion to do what you want to do with. Do you ever see the formula for peace in the Bible? At the first coming of Christ, Jesus showed up. What an interesting time that is. Though it's not the theme of the Bible, it's very important because it's part of the theme. The first coming and the Second Coming are very close. Though I said that the theme of the Bible is not Christ, the theme of the Bible is not God, and the theme of the Bible is not salvation, the theme of the Bible is a kingdom and a king. When Christ came, He came as King. When He showed up, if you're paying attention, the heavenly host told you and me how to have world peace. You ever see it? It's the formula. It's the world peace formula found all the way back here in Luke chapter 2. I mean, let's just go back and look at it. Luke chapter 2, the Lord is born. He's down there. It's so easy, I just can't believe you can't get it. Luke 2:8-14

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Every Christmas, every holiday, you see little banners, "Peace on earth, good will toward men." United Nations, they got up there and they wanted to bring peace on earth, good will toward men. They were

started after World War I, and they said, "Well, not no war anymore." There's been 275 wars since the United Nations came in. "Peace on earth, good will toward men." Oh, hey, that's only half the formula. Look at the first part of the verse: "Glory to God in the highest, then peace on earth, good will toward men." There'll be no peace on earth till this nation, this country, this world, give glory to God in the highest, then the peace conference. The world's not going to give Him glory now. That's why the Lord's not going to come back at the Second Coming like He came the first coming. Did you ever analyze that? The first time He came, the Romans hated Him. We studied it. They hated His doctrine. We studied it a couple of weeks back. So they crucified Him. Some young Christian one time, a good little guy, wanted to learn the Bible years ago, and he asked me a question on one of my Bible studies saying, "Why does Christ not come back the second time like He did the first time?" Good question. Could you imagine that? Let's say that Christ showed up today just like He did the first coming, walked into the average church in Kansas City, walked into Washington, said, "Okay, I'm back." Well, let me tell you, Catholics couldn't accept Him. He thought Mary was a sinner just like all other women, needed to be saved. Most Baptists couldn't accept Him. They want to know what school He graduated from. Charismatics couldn't buy into it. Jesus never spoke in tongues. Mormons couldn't buy into it. He wouldn't have more than one wife. The Unitarians couldn't buy into it because Jesus had a doctrine. Every religion on the face of this planet, other than Bible-believing Christianity, could not accept Him today. Let me tell you something. If you think they wouldn't kill Him this time than they did the last time, you're sorely mistaken. So He ain't coming back that way this time. He's coming back as the King on a white horse, and I'm coming with Him, and He's going to reign in a righteous way in Jerusalem under a rod of iron. There was a little boy one time, just a little run of a kid. Every time he'd go to school, two or three boys would beat him up and take his lunch money. Every day they'd look for him. The little guy, he'd try to defend himself for a while, but he realized he was outnumbered and he was getting beat up every day. But one day he got out of school about five minutes early. He took off around the corner, got down to the end of the block, and looked back, and just about that time those three big boys came out of that thing, and one of them, the biggest ones, saw him. Started chasing him. That little guy lived about nine blocks away, and he was running. Them little legs couldn't hardly get him going. That old boy, he was twice as fast, and he was gaining on him. That little kid got halfway home, looked over his shoulder, that boy was only about 200 yards behind him. He got to that thing where he was about 50 feet from his house and his gate, and he looked back, and that boy was right on his tail. The kid got the gate open, got in that thing, and got around the back of the house, and he looked over his shoulder, and he went around the house and that boy just leaped right over that hedge, you know, that fence, right on his tail. He got around the back of that house and got his hand in the door of that old boy, clamped down on his shoulder, and said, "Now I got you." About that time, the back door opened. His big brother just got home from the Marine Corps on leave. Came out the back door, Sergeant stripes, campaign medals. That old boy looked at that big old Marine, looked at that little guy, and said, "Hey, you want to beat me up now? Want to take my lunch money now? Want to blow me around now? Go ahead. My big brother's here." Hey, this old world will kick you. This old world will beat you up. This old world will blow you. It's okay. Wait till our big brother gets here. Well, He comes back. Wait till He gets back. Oh, I'm telling you, my friend, man's efforts for world peace are worthless. There'll be no peace till He comes

back. There'll be no peace till the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Peace. The Temporary Nature of Earthly Suffering Now, let me just say to you, as a Christian, understanding this doctrine will get you through anything this old world can throw at you. I'm not going to stand up here and tell you that as a Christian in this life, saved and doing all that you can do for God—and I know we all fail, I don't ever point my finger at anybody—I'm just saying, I'm not going to stand here today and tell you it's not going to be tough. I'm not going to tell you there's not going to be heartache in your Christian life. I'm not going to stand up here and tell you there's not going to be sickness or discouragement or health issues or grieving if somebody dies. I'm not going to tell you that there's not going to be disappointment. I'm not going to tell you there's not going to be sorrow. I'm not going to tell you that. The Bible says that those things are in this world because of sin. I look over to Hebrews 11. You don't have to turn to it. But Hebrews 11 is God's great hall of fame. He lists 16 great men who, if you study their lives independently, will show you that they tried to love God, wanted to love God, did love God, but they struggled with the things in this whole world just like you and I. Everywhere in their lives there was heartache, there was death, there was discouragement, there was failure, there was grieving, there was sorrow, there was disappointment. Every one of them. But oh, bless God, I read down there in Hebrews 11. I think Abraham sums it all up for you and for me. He sums it all up for everybody when he says, "Yes, he went through these perils. Yes, he went through this sickness and discouragement." But the bottom line, Abraham says, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Now, that's what I'm talking about. That's what I'm looking for. I don't care about this whole world. I don't care about this life. It's going to hurt. It's going to be painful. But I've got some news for you. It's only temporary. There'll only be a time when you have to sorrow. There'll only be disappointment for a short time. He's coming back. In my life, my perspective is forget this world. I'm in this world, but I'm not of this world. My pilgrimage, I'm looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. He's coming back. No matter how tough it gets, it's only temporary. I'm going to tell you something. He said that the preaching ministry needs to be toward the east because we need to never forget the Horse Gate, the East Gate. It'll change your whole perspective. It'll give you purpose in life. A Life-Changing Perspective on Death In my ministry over the years, there are two things that stick out. One of them is the saddest thing I ever experienced. It didn't happen to me. It happened to a young lady. I'm not going to tell you about that. But if somebody would ask you, "What is the most tragic, saddest thing in all of the years of your life dealing with people in the Word of God?" I would think of that in a second. It was so devastating and it was so unbelievable that if I told you this morning, there would not, in a woman, anyhow, there would not be a dry eye in this place. It absolutely just took it out of me. Then there was the greatest thing I ever saw. If somebody would say, "What is the thing that just lit your burners more than anything else?" it would be just the event that I'm going to tell you about. It was a long time ago. A godly couple up in their years. Loved God, loved the Word of God, believed the Word of God. They were role models for me. They didn't live in Kansas City. Back in Ohio where I went to church. I used to run around with Mel Shabaka back then, and he was the guy that really taught me the Bible. Many of you know him. Others that don't know him, we'll meet him at some point in our little building of a church here. He'll be around. But one night he called me on the phone and he said that this man was dying. He said, "I'm going to go over. Will you go with me?" I said, "Sure." Never forget it as long as I live. Some of you, this is going

to sound corny. Maybe in time as you grow, it won't be corny. I've never forgotten it. It really changed my whole life in the perspective of looking at things. I've never forgotten it as long as I live. Just not like I've forgotten the bad thing. We got to the hospital. I could look out inside the windows there and I could see him laying in a hospital bed. I knew he was just about dead. His wife, godly woman, he was a godly man. She was holding his hand. She had the Bible open where she was obviously reading the Bible at some point. But now he was just about gone. I stood there and Mel went up and prayed with him, you know, and talked to him. I did what I could do, which was not very much because I was just in the learning process of all this stuff. You know, I was just there praying for Mel and praying for them. So I stood back along the door and Mel came back. We just stood there waiting for the moment. We knew it was coming. We didn't want her to be alone. Family hadn't got there yet. The strangest thing happened. He put a little tug on her arm. She leaned over. He was whispering something in her ear. It went on about 20, 30 seconds. Then she kind of sat back, and she had a smile on her face. He had a smile on his face. Five minutes later he was gone. I felt like he was telling her he loved her, telling her goodbye. I'm sure that he did. I stood there not knowing what to do. Difficult time. But she had such a peace in her face and such a joy. Mel and I were standing there and the family showed up. They all were doing everything, you know. She walked out there and I opened the door for her and Mel was there. Mel just said to her, "Boy, I'm glad you got to say your goodbyes. Because so many people don't." She said, "You don't understand." I'm standing there, man. She said, "You don't understand. We didn't say our goodbyes. John told me that he picked me out a good horse." I thought to myself, they understand something about God in that book that I don't understand. How many of God's people at the time of death are focused on the theme of the Bible and not themselves? I thought to myself, as I went home that night, I thought, "Bob, write this down someplace and don't ever forget it." I never had to write it down because I never forgot it. But without a doubt, it was the most incredible thing I had ever experienced in my life. It changed my perspective. Whatever I do, whatever I preach, whoever I deal with, whether it's building this church with you or teaching somebody the Bible on Thursday night or whatever, behind in my mind, I try honest to God—God knows my heart—I honest to God, You know my heart, Lord, when I preach or when I teach, I preach and teach like it may be the last time I will before the Lord comes back, because I know deep down in my heart, it may well be. By saying that, I say this: you, my friend, better listen like it may be the last message you hear, because it may well be. Three Tests for the Christian The Bible says, "If we suffer with Him, we'll reign with Him." Abraham said, "I'm looking for a city whose builder and maker is God." Oh, that's what Paul meant in Romans 8, when he said, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" He said, "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Those are all physical things. Then in Romans 8:38-39, he jumps to the spiritual side: Romans 8:38-39

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. In other words, he's saying, "Ain't nothing going to separate you. Nothing." Three tests: Test of spiritual growth. How do you take the message today? Test of loving the book. How do you get along when you miss it today? Test for the love of Christ. Let me ask you a question. Did anybody save five years or less? I give you a buy.

Anybody hasn't been saved at least five years and really plugged in, I give you a buy on this. This is not fair to dump this on you. I'm talking to us, you spiritual people, you folks that claim to love God and love the Bible, I believe you do. You want to test the love of Christ? It's the Second Coming. Let me ask you a question. God grant you one prayer right now. You say, "Bob, you pray it, it happens." What would it be? I can't speak for you. I know what it would be for me. It would be, "Lord, come on, let's go." Last prayer of the Bible. In the book of Revelation, John writes, you know the last thing he says? He displayed all that God is doing. He's seen all the miracles and all the great things that God was going to do. The last thing he says in Revelation chapter 22, verse 20 is: Revelation 22:20

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. I'm in this world, folks, but I'm not of this world. Sure, I enjoy life. I have no death mark on me that I'm trying to die from Christ. I like living. I enjoy my family. I enjoy my grandbaby. I enjoy you. I enjoy our time together. I love you more than you ever know. I love our time together. I love the church that God's given me. But you know what? It's only temporary. Don't ever think that it's permanent. Don't ever think anything in your life is permanent. Boy, you know, God can take it away just like that. Your health, your kids, your car, your family, your house. It's all temporary. Don't get wound up in those things. I'm not saying don't give them their due respect. Obviously do. I'm saying it's only temporary. It's only temporary. It's only temporary. Someday you and I are going to stand before Him. We're going to give an account for the day you were saved. That's why I say to you all the time, I don't care where you've been. I don't care what you know and what you don't know about the Bible. God doesn't either. As long as there's a point in your life and you say, "God, from this point on, I'm going to give You everything I can. You're going to become the number one priority." It doesn't mean you have to quit your job and shave your head and go to the airport. It means you make the book, God, a priority in your life. Yeah, she says, "He told me He's going to pick out a good horse for me." That's somebody who understood the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ. God help us to look at it with a reality like that. Father.