

Nehemiah 3

Sunday 9/7/2003

We have been in Nehemiah chapter 3, talking about these gates. We saw how these gates are really a picture of what our church needs, the emphasis that we need to put on things, and all that we really need to focus on. There are nine gates that represent the entering into this city, the city being a picture of the ministry and the work of God in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the local church, the body of Christ meeting together the way God intended it to do in the book of Acts, meeting on the first day of the week, just like the Bible lays it out, is exactly what we ought to do. We are the program of God. Coming into this church, there should be some avenues, or "gates," so to speak, opportunities of ministry that we take.

We have talked about a lot of them. Last week, we began focusing on the last two. We saw how these last two, down here in Nehemiah 3:27-28, say:

Nehemiah 3:27-28

27 After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel.

28 From above the horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house. And after them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. And after him repaired Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate.

Two gates we talked about here have a double emphasis for us, and they represent the most important doctrine anywhere in the Word of God: the doctrine of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Last week, we talked about the Horse Gate and how the Bible talks about the armies in heaven that follow the Lord Jesus Christ, how that is a picture of us. We are coming back with the Lord.

Now, we talked about this gate having two perspectives: one for you and for me, the Horse Gate, which is where they took the horses in, and the East Gate, which is where the Prince, the King, went in. We talked about the Horse Gate last week, simply, what the second coming of Christ means to you and me as a believer, and the emphasis we need to have in our life. We talked about it being the theme of the Bible, and everything that we do as Christians, we need to have that thought in mind that the Lord is coming back, never losing sight of that.

I. The East Gate: God's Perspective on the Second Coming

Today, we are going to talk about the East Gate. I want you to take your Bibles and turn back to Revelation chapter 19. We were there last week for a short time and talked about just a couple of verses, but we want to look at it today in a greater way and really focus on the second coming of Christ from God's standpoint.

Now, I must say, this is going to be a bit of a theology lesson today, yet it's going to be a very interesting theology lesson. In fact, I can probably safely state this: if you pay attention today and you can really write fast, you probably will go out of here today knowing everything there is to

know about the Bible from beginning to end as far as how it runs. I'm not saying you're going to know all the intimate details, but I'm going to give you today, in the course of our study, the Bible in a nutshell.

People look at the Bible and they think, "Well, how does this fit, and how does this fit?" I learned this a long time ago: the learning of the Bible is simply this: if you can get where it starts and where it ends, and the main events in between, then everything else you hear the rest of your life, you read, you study, you're just going to put on that kind of timeline that the Bible is. The Bible runs a course of 7,000 years. It starts with Adam and Eve 4,000 years before Christ, and it winds up with the second coming of Christ sometime any minute now. So that's the course. Once you see the events in the Bible laying out along that course, the Bible becomes pretty easy.

In our study of the second coming of Christ, we've kind of got to do that. I know I talk fast, but I'm interesting. I know I talk fast, but I have a lot of things to say, and I only have a short time to say it in. So this is going to be a theology lesson because the greatest doctrine in the Bible is the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, and we've got to go through this to get it. So bear with me. This is one tape you want to get, I'm sure. We just had a price increase, and now they're \$100 apiece. But anyway, if you want to get some Bible down, this is how you do it.

When we're done this morning, you'll have a pretty good idea of how the Bible lays itself out. Then the rest of your life is just a matter of putting these together. On Thursday night, when we have our Bible study and somebody asks a question, from this point on, you'll be able to say, "I know where that goes; that goes right here." I preach next week or sometime down the line, or somebody else preaches, you'll say, "Oh, I know where that goes; it goes right here." What we're doing today is giving you the skeleton, and then the rest of your life, all you have to do is put the meat on the bones, and you're ready to roll.

All right, let's pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We love you. We ask you to bless us today as we come to your Word, and we'll thank you and praise you in Jesus' name. For His sake, we ask it. Amen.

II. Revelation 19: The Lord's Return in Power

Revelation 19:11. Let me just say this: there are two passages in the Bible that are the greatest two passages on the second coming of Christ, one in the New Testament, one in the Old Testament. We're going to look at them both today. Without a doubt, the greatest passage in the New Testament on the second coming of Christ would be Revelation 19. It's the last account in the Bible, and it is the most detailed and gives the most impact.

I told you before that the doctrine of the second coming of Christ is the greatest doctrine in the Bible, and every book of the Bible is just filled with it. For every verse you give me on eternal security, this or that, whatever your subject may be, I'll give you ten on the second coming of Christ, a 10 to 1 ratio. There are more references to the second coming of Christ in the Bible than any other subject. When you start reading through the Bible and you find the phrase "that day," "the day," or "the day of the Lord," the context will always be the second coming of Christ. You

can just stop right there, put your little note down, or make a mental note: "When I'm reading, it has something to do with the second coming of Christ."

So, he says in Revelation 19:11, we talked about some of this last week:

Revelation 19:11-16

11 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.

12 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.

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

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

15 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.

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

Now, I want to explain this verse. I'm going to go through it here, and I'm going to show you what you're dealing with. This verse is the final verse in the Bible that deals with the second coming of Christ, and it shows the coming Lord as He comes back to earth.

The first thing is, He's on a white horse. We talked about that last week. The Bible says He's called Faithful and True. He's coming back to set up a government. Isaiah 11 says that it's going to be a government of righteousness. He's coming back to set up a government that is going to be built on faithfulness and truth. The Bible says that He's coming back to make war. He's going to destroy the Antichrist and all the armies when He shows up. The Bible says that He makes that war in righteousness, and He judges in righteousness, and that's how He makes war. In other words, it's the right kind of war.

Somebody asked a question in Bible study last Thursday night about, as a Christian, how do you deal with the concept of war? Should you go to war? The Bible says, "Thou shalt not kill," and they asked about that. We talked about that. But in this case, here is a war that is a righteous war. Wars exist on this planet because of sin. As long as there's going to be sin, there's going to be wars. Whether wars are moral or immoral is indifferent. There's going to be sin. Some wars are very justified; some are not justified. But in this case, this will be the only war in the history of mankind that will be run right, and it will be run in righteousness by a righteous Judge, and He's going to make war from the Word of God.

The Bible says that His eyes are as a flame of fire. You see those eyes in Revelation 1 and 2. You see it back in the Old Testament, and it talks about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and His judgment. It talks about how His eyes are full of fire. That means the judgment of God is going

to fall on the Antichrist and the nations. The Bible says He has a vesture dipped in blood. You go back to Isaiah 63, and it talks about how He treadeth the winepress.

I don't know if you know what that means or not. I'm just kind of giving you an overview of the second coming of Christ here so you get an idea. The Bible says that when He comes back, the Antichrist has all the armies massed down in the Valley of Armageddon, and they're going to attack the nation of Israel. They've got the nation of Israel killed down to a remnant. In that Valley of Megiddo, all the Antichrist's army, millions and millions and millions of men, are massed to wipe out the remaining Jews and the nation of Israel.

Right at that moment, right at that moment when they're all surrounded, here's another movie plot. We talked about the movie plots last week; here's one. You've got the settlers in the old wagons, and the Indians are all around them, and they're circled down there, and they're shooting, and the Indians are just going to wipe them out down there, and they're just whittling them down. Right before they get wiped out and the Indians massed, what happens? Off in the distance, you hear, "Here comes the cavalry!" That's what's going to happen.

The Jews will be down in that valley, and they will be surrounded. A hundred million troops of the Antichrist have been poised to wipe out the nation of Israel. By that, the Antichrist is going to rid himself of the "plague" of the nation of Israel that stopped him from taking Jerusalem and being the true God that he wants to be. Right at that moment, Matthew 24:29-30 talks about, "Lift up your head; your redemption draweth nigh." Right at that moment, Revelation 19, here He comes on a white horse, leading the armies, and the cavalry come just at the right time and wipes out the nation of Israel.

Isaiah 63 talks about that winepress. It talks about how He tramples the nations and the armies of the nations like somebody treading in a wine fat of grapes. It talks about the blood sprinkling on His garments. This is the great second coming of the Lord Jesus, where He comes back, and He's crowned, as the Bible says, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Revelation 19 shows you the power. Revelation 19 shows you the impact. Revelation 19 takes all the Old Testament passages and prophecies and finalizes them in one series of verses that show us very clearly and plainly the Lord coming back and all of the righteous applications of it. That's the greatest set of verses in the New Testament on the second coming of Christ.

III. Zechariah 14: The Lord's Return to the Mount of Olives

Now, let's look at the greatest one in the Old Testament, Zechariah chapter 14. Zechariah 14 is an incredible passage that deals with all of the things that are going on here. Zechariah 14:1. Now here it comes. This is an Old Testament passage showing you very clearly. It gives you extra information. See, over in Revelation 19, you got the battle, you got the horses, you got all those things laid out. Now you're going to get how it really lays itself out, and you put the two together.

Zechariah 14:1-9

1 Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

2 For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

3 Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

5 And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

6 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark:

7 But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.

8 And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

9 And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.

You know what His name is? The Word of God, Revelation 19:13. So we see that Zechariah 14 talks about that great account in the Old Testament. You saw how "the day of the Lord," "that day," "the day," all the way through the Bible, and the Bible is filled with it, built around Jerusalem, the city of God.

IV. Jerusalem: The Key to All History

I want to say something about this. Jerusalem, without a doubt, is the key to all history. Jerusalem, the city of God, all the way through the Bible, if you're paying attention, you're told that that's where God's plan is going to unfold.

You know, back in the distant past, if you go back to Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, you'd find that there was a time when the devil, as we know him, was not the devil. He's called Lucifer, and he is set up in a place where he's over all of God's creation. The Bible calls him "the anointed cherub that covereth" the throne. You had God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, and then you had a created being called Lucifer. Lucifer was over all of God's creation, and you know where the seat of God's creation was back then, in that distant past, someplace before Genesis 1:1? It was Jerusalem on this earth.

I don't have time to go into showing you how the universe has been restructured with the fall and all that, but there was a time when the earth was at the top of it, and Jerusalem was the pinnacle

of it. All of God's creation that He made, and all the heavenly host of angelic beings, worshiped God. There was one being that sat in Jerusalem that was a caretaker of everything that God had and God made. His name was Lucifer.

The Bible says he was king, but he wasn't satisfied being king. Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 say that in his heart, pride lifted him up. He wasn't satisfied with being what God gave him, like a lot of God's people. He wanted more, and he said in his heart, "I will be like the most High God." He said, "I'm going to overthrow God, and I'm going to take Jerusalem, and I'm going to be God." Remember when the devil showed up in the New Testament in Matthew, and he tempted the Lord Jesus Christ? What was the one thing that he wanted Christ to do? He wanted Christ to bow down and worship him and say that he was God. That's always been what he's wanted, because as God, he gets Jerusalem, and he wants Jerusalem. Jerusalem, the city of God, is the center.

Well, you know what happened. The whole universe is thrown into chaos. The whole universe is thrown upside down. When you find in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," that's the original creation where Lucifer was. Then the next verse says, "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." There's the catastrophe. Somewhere in between there, the fall of Lucifer, who now becomes Satan, and he has one goal: to get back in Jerusalem and to get Jerusalem and crown himself as king because he's kicked out.

Now, I don't want to give you the suggestion that God was kind of walking around in heaven, and some angel came up and said, "Hey God, you don't know this, but Lucifer's causing some problems." "Oh, he is? Gee, what am I going to do? Well, he's going to overthrow you." "Well, oh, just kick him out. Get on?" No. God knew what was going to happen. God is infinite. God is all-knowing, and God, in His original plan, knew what was going to take place, and He allowed it to take place because He says, "You know what? I will interact My plan right through the devil. And the devil is wicked as he is, and he's going to burn in the lake of fire for eternity. I'll use him. I'll use him in the plan for man. I'll use him in the plan for earth because I've got a plan going down here that someday we're going to put this thing back the way it was, and I'm just going to carve out a little time period right now called 'time,' and I'm going to allow every man and woman on this planet to make a choice if they want to go be with Me or not. I'll use him." So I want you to understand that. It wasn't like, "Oh God, oh God, the devil is tearing the thing up down there. Oh, what am I going to do? Oh, I know." No, it wasn't at all. God is sovereign, and God is in charge.

V. God's Plan Through History

So what does God do? Genesis 1. He puts a garden down in Eden, and He puts a man and a woman down there, and what does He tell them? He says, "Be fruitful, multiply, and what? Replenish." Put something back that was lost, because when Satan fell, the Bible says he took a third of the angels with him. They become what we commonly call demons or devils. So He puts it back down there in Genesis. He puts Adam and Eve down there in the garden, and He gives them a commission.

What happens? You don't go one chapter, then the old devil shows up again. The old devil shows up again. You know that Adam is called the first Adam. Christ is called the second Adam. You know, in the line of Adam, the line of Christ, you realize the promised seed comes from one of Adam's boys. You know what the devil did? The devil showed up down there and he said, "God has reconstructed His plan. He's put Adam and Eve down in a garden right smack dab in Jerusalem, where Jerusalem is going to be. And if they live forever, they're going to be king, and they're going to rule." So what did he do? He showed up to Eve. The rest is history. Man is thrown into sin. The devil walked out the door laughing, "Destroyed God's plan!" No, you didn't. You're part of God's plan, whether you like it or not.

Shall we go down through history? What do we find? We find Noah. We find at that particular time that the earth is wicked. The world's in sin. In fact, the Bible says that all that man thinks to do is against God and God's plan. God looked for a man. God found a man named Noah. God said to Noah, "Noah, I want you to build an ark. And all the people that love Me are going to get into the ark." You realize, in Noah's time, by a conservative estimate, there's probably four and a half, maybe five billion people on planet earth, and only eight people got in the ark. This world was wicked. He got on, and God wiped the thing out. When Noah stepped off that ark, he was the sole possessor of planet earth. God said, "Okay, from you, I'm going to bring a man named Abraham."

So some time passes on up into Genesis 12, Genesis 15, Genesis 18, and Genesis 19. You have a man named Abraham. He's down there, and God says to Abraham, "You know what? I like you, Abraham. We get along really good. Here's what I want you to do. I want you to, by faith, you're over here in Babylon. You're over here in the Ur of the Chaldees. You're over here in Saddam's country. You're over there where Saddam Hussein is, over there in Iraq and Iran. You're over here right now. And you know what? I've got a land for you over here that I want you to be king of, and in time, through your loins, the great King of Kings is going to come from. So I'm going to call you out by faith. You don't know where you're going. You have never been there. You have to take My word for it. Abraham, come on down, and let's go over to Jerusalem."

Well, Abraham heads to Jerusalem. I'm making a long story short. He gets to Jerusalem, where Jerusalem is going to be, right where all the temple is going to be, and all those things are going to enact. From Abraham comes Jacob, and from Jacob, God says, "You're going to have twelve boys. And those twelve boys are going to become twelve tribes." In fact, Jacob, "I'm going to change your name. I'm going to call you Israel." From Israel, you're going to have twelve boys. They're going to make twelve tribes of Israel. So the twelve tribes come into play.

But all the time they're down there, all the time they're out there, the devil is hard at work. God says to Jacob, "Well, you know what? You don't know this, but there's a prophecy that needs to be fulfilled. So I'm going to take all you people, all your sons, and I'm going to send you down into Egypt." So we have the story of Joseph and how that unfolds, how the children of Israel get down into Egypt. They're down in Egypt 400 and some years, and you know, of course, the Pharaoh that knew Joseph dies, and they get another one, and the devil makes sure this one isn't friendly. He persecutes them. They probably built the great pyramids, and he kills them by the millions. You know why? He's trying to wipe them out. He's happy. He has them enslaved in

Egypt, and it looks like they're not going to get out, and it looks like finally now the devil is going to keep the people of God down in Egypt in an iron furnace and butcher them and kill them and work them to death and starve them to death and kill them. The devil is just as happy as can be because he's got plans for Jerusalem.

But all the way down, God always messes up the plan. God sends them a deliverer, Moses. Moses shows up, kind of looks like Charlton Heston. He shows up. He walks up to Pharaoh, kind of looks like Yul Brynner, and he says, "Let my people go," kind of like Martin Luther King. Pharaoh said, "I'm not letting them go." The devil said, "Don't you let them go." "I'll let them go." Well, let me tell you something, by the time God got through with Pharaoh, Pharaoh said, "You can go." So what happened? They took off down the road. Pharaoh said, "The Pharaoh, don't let him go." Pharaoh said, "I'm going to wipe him out." Goes after him. They get to the Red Sea down there, you know, and, "Oh, there's that big body of water," and they said, "What are we going to do?" God said, "I'll take care of you. You're My people, and you're going to the Promised Land." He split that Red Sea, and they walked across that sea bottom just like it was dry land. They got on the other side, you know, and they looked around, and Pharaoh says, "Oh, devil says, 'Oh, watch me use God's plan!'" And he goes right down through there, and God says, "Okay, boys, you angels that are holding back the water, let her rip!" Down they went, man. Drowned him.

All these liberal theologians who like to make fun of the miracles of the Bible, you know what they tell you? They say, "Well, the Bible really didn't mean that. It wasn't the Red Sea; it was a sea of reeds, and the water was only... it wasn't really a miracle. The water in the sea of reeds was only four inches deep." See how God fixes people. God says God divided the Red Sea through a great miracle and drowned Pharaoh's army. The liberals say, "Oh, no, no, no, no. There are no supernatural miracles in the Bible. You misunderstood that. It was the sea of reeds, and the water there was only four inches deep." Still a miracle. The whole of Pharaoh's army drowned in four inches of water. You don't beat God. You don't beat Him. Idiots. You know what? If they spent as much time studying the Bible and loving God as they do trying to get out from under it, we'd have revival in this world.

Well, you know what happens. They go on a journey. A journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. Takes them 40 years. They could have got there in two weeks. We won't get into that. I'll preach that to you some other time. They go down there, and when they go into the land down there, after 40 years of wandering, and Joshua and Judges, they go into the land, they're looking for a king. Finally, they get a king, David, making a long story short, and they establish a kingdom. The greatest period of time, now they've come all the way through the first part of the Bible, and now they're in the land. First Samuel, Second Samuel, First Kings, Second Kings, First and Second Chronicles. That's where we're at. We've come a long way now. We're almost halfway through the Bible. They're in the land, and this is the greatest time of Israel in Jerusalem. The greatest time. David, a type of Christ, is on the throne. Solomon, a type of God the Father, is on the throne, and Israel is at rest and peace, and the whole world is looking at it.

The devil says, "I want it back." So what does he do? He gets them to disobey God's Word, fall in love with other religions, bring in all these other gods, because he knows that God will not

stand for that. The devil is not dumb, folks. He knows that he can't wipe out the nation of Israel, but he knows that if he can get the nation of Israel to do wrong, God will come down and wipe them out. So, boy, he takes them into apostasy, and the nation of Israel falls apart. All First and Second Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles is nothing more, after Solomon, than a picture of the kingdom being torn in half with Solomon's boys, and it goes downhill.

Finally, in 606 BC, God has enough, and He sends Nebuchadnezzar down and Sennacherib down, and they destroy Jerusalem, and they take them into captivity for 70 years. The devil has a ball in Jerusalem, laughing. It's his, and the whole world now is under Gentile domination, run by the devil, who runs these Gentile nations. The Bible tells you that.

So they go back after 70 years in Ezra and Nehemiah, and they try to rebuild, and we get some great pictures of how to build a church from all that. But you know what? They never become what they once were, and for 400 years, God writes nothing to any man. There's no more visions; there's no more God speaking. In fact, the theologians call it the 400 silent years, that God doesn't speak to man.

Then suddenly, around 3 or 4 BC, some old guy with a leather and girdle, locust juice seeping out the side of his mouth, must have been a rough-looking guy, he comes down there and he says, "Behold, the King of the Jews is here, the Lamb of God!" God sent this world His Son. But you ever study Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? When He comes, He comes to who? Israel. He comes to right there in the land where they're at, in Bethlehem, right outside of Jerusalem, because Jerusalem now is in the hands of the Romans. The devil's got control, but it's God's country, it's God's city, and it's God's people's city. The whole history is nothing more than one battle back and forth.

You know what happens? Christ shows up, portrays Himself as the King of the Jews, talks about Jerusalem being the city of God. You know what the devil does? Through the Romans and the scribes and the Pharisees, they kill Him. They kill Him. Make a long story short, God gives the nation of Israel a couple more chances. By the early part of the book of Acts, they dump it. By Acts 7, God's finished with the Jew. In comes the Church Age. In comes the Gentiles. Peter passes off the scene, the Apostle of the Jews. Paul comes on the scene, the Apostle of the Gentiles, and we have the Church Age. They're first called Christians in Acts 11 and 12, in Antioch, and off it goes.

God right now has put the nation of Israel on a backburner. He's calling out a church body, you and me, to carry the Gospel, but He's not done with Israel. Israel's in apostasy. Israel is going to have to go through some things and learn some lessons, and Israel is going to have to go through the Great Tribulation Period. So some time passes. You know what happens when the church... you know what the Church Age is? The Church Age is nothing more than two guys fighting all over about Jerusalem. It's all that it is. You're going to see that in just a little bit. It's all that it is. You fight the Crusades, 11, 12 Crusades for a thousand-plus years. You know what it's all about? The Roman Catholic Church wants Jerusalem. The Muslims want Jerusalem. They fight it back and forth. Millions of people are killed. I mean, it's a terrible thing, but it's all about Jerusalem. It's always been about Jerusalem. Always has been, always has been.

Finally, around the turn of the century, you know, you have World War I, and without going into a lot of detail, World War I got the land ready for the Jew because the whole shape of Europe changed in the Middle East. World War II got the Jew ready for the land. In 1948, on May the 12th, they became a nation again, and God started a time clock to wind them down for the second coming of Christ. He says, "It's coming." That's the last sign you get, folks, if you're paying attention. The last sign the church got from God was the establishment of the nation of Israel as a nation.

You know what we got now? We got the Palestinians don't want them in there. We got the liberation armies don't want them in there. We got all the Middle East don't want them in there. India don't want them. Egypt don't want them. Pakistan don't want them. Nobody wants them. Every Muslim kid, from the time he's two years old and can think and reason, is told that the Jew is bad, that they live for one reason: that is to wipe out the nation of Israel. The whole world is against the Jew, and the Jew says, "I don't care. I'm against the whole world." He's a tough little guy because God said, "I'll bless those that bless thee, and I'll curse those that curse thee." He says, "You'll be like that, Israel. You're like that burning bush that Moses saw on Mount Sinai. It was a bush that was burned but will not be consumed." You will be beaten, you will be burned, you will be murdered, but you will not be consumed because that city's for you, and I'm going to give you My Son as your King, and I'm going to give you a bunch of other New Testament believers who are going to get bodies like My Son, who are going to reign with Him, who are going to be with you.

Well, the first coming of Christ takes place. The Church Age takes place. We're living in it right now. The Church Age runs about 2,000 years, starts with the death of Christ thereabouts, and goes up to the rapture of the church, going to happen any moment. In fact, I got up this morning, I didn't think we'd be here. I thought we'd be gone by now. You say, "You really believe that?" I believe a lot of things that the average person don't believe, but I know they're true. The Bible is a weird book. You ever know that? People think that real Christians are weird. You know why real Christians are weird? Because they believe a weird book.

You take the side of the nation of Israel today, you're weird. We live in a day of white supremacists. We live in a day of anti-Semitism. We live in a day when everybody's against the Jew. I'm going to tell you something, I live in a day, and I believe my Bible, where you ought to be for the Jew. I'm for them. I don't agree with where they're at in apostasy, the Word of God, but the Bible says that for the Gospel's sake, they're my enemy, but for me to understand it, for their sake, they're the beloved and elect of God. God's going to restore them. It's going to be a matter of time. Anytime now, it should happen anytime. That's why we don't close the doors. Now, if you really know your Bible, you know the door don't make a difference. We're going up through the top anyhow. Just trying to see if you were paying attention. You're all kind of a little grumpy this morning. Some of you ladies, I understand, looks like you had a bad hair day, but that's okay. Didn't say who, didn't say who, didn't say who, won't say who.

The church age takes place. One of these days, one of these nights, the rapture is going to take place in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. We're going to be gone. Oh, that's going to be a great time. Ah, it's going to be a great time. Somebody said, "Well, we're going to get to the

Judgment Seat of Christ." Yeah, we are in a little bit, but we know where we're going. We're going to pick out our horses. We're going to get our horses. A lot of people died before us. I hope there's some left. I'll tell you one thing about the Bible, I read over there in a verse, in fact, it's down here a little bit farther on, talks about somebody coming back on white jackasses. I always was afraid that was going to be me because by the time I got there, there wouldn't be anything left. We'd have to get one of them donkeys to come back on. I want a jet-powered stallion, man. I want something that's got afterburners on it, boy, that I hit the throttles and just go. I want something that's got double 40-millimeter cannons on both wings, man, and just come down and strafe them.

You say, "Oh, you don't, you don't know your Bible very well." I know a place in the Bible where, talking about the second coming of Christ, we come back where they, where I'm standing there, or you're standing there, somebody's standing there, and an army guy of the Antichrist comes up with a big sword or a big spear, big bayonet, whatever the case may be, and just goes to bayonet somebody, and just goes right through, and we got to look down and whack, knocks him about a million light years away, man. That's the kind of battle I'm talking about. I don't need no MP5, no Glock 40, no M16, boy. I just got the power of God, man, to wipe you out. That's what He says. He says this: "Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, with it He should smite the nations." Well, I remember one time in the Gospels where the Lord turned around and described the affairs of them, and He just spoke the word, and that knocked them down. You say, "I don't believe that." Oh, I don't know. The first time I ever heard a man preach and knock me down.

The rapture takes place. What happens? When the rapture takes place, the tribulation takes place, seven years. The Antichrist finally thinks he won. He goes into the nation of Israel. The Bible says in the book of 2 Thessalonians 2:4, and he sits down on the throne of God, and he does what he's always wanted to do: he calls himself God. Then here he comes. The Antichrist turns on the nation of Israel. He hates them. He's going to make sure that they're not the people of God in the city of God, and he wipes them out. Then one day, one morning, here He comes, the Lord Jesus, Revelation 19, as we already saw. He comes down. He wipes them out.

Let me tell you something, this doctrine is so important and so powerful in the Bible and in history that you can't get away from it. It is so important and so powerful that in the Bible itself, every move, every move from east to west in the Bible is a good move. That is the direction that Christ comes. It is the second coming of Christ.

VI. East to West: The Direction of God's Blessing

When Adam went into the garden to take of the tree of life, he went from east to west. When Abraham was called out, as I said, to go to Ur of the Chaldees, he went from east to west. When Jacob got right with God and went back to Bethel, it was east to west. When the Jew went into the land, God purposely brought him around there and brought him in from east to west. When he went back from the captivity, they went from east to west. I mean, when you went into the tabernacle to the Holy of Holies to lay the sacrifice down, you went from east to west. Having the wise men at the birth of Christ, when they showed up, they said, "We have seen His star in the where? In the east." And they traveled to the west, and they found Him. Every move in the

Bible that is the absolute move that Christ makes when He comes back from east to west through that Eastern Gate is a good move.

Every opposite is a bad move. When Adam and Eve are cast out of the garden, they go west to east. When Cain leaves the presence of God and at murder and builds a city, he goes west to east. When Jacob backslides and runs from God, he goes west to east. When David ran from God, he goes west to east. When the Jew went into captivity, they went west to east. No, no, no. Horace Greeley had it right. He didn't know his Bible, but when he said, "Go west, young man," he had the right direction. You can't beat it. That Bible is something else.

I'll show you something else. You realize that in your Bible, there are two times in your Bible somebody's told to take their shoes off their feet. Two times. Once in Exodus 3:5, once in Joshua 5:15. In Exodus 3:5, it is Moses, and he's on Mount Sinai where he gets the Ten Commandments. In Joshua 5:15, it's Joshua, and he's on the Mount of Olives, just like Zechariah. You know that Joshua means Jesus. You know that Moses is one of the greatest types of Christ in all the Bible. You know there's only two times you find in the Bible where somebody is told to take their shoes off. Why? Because their feet were tired? Because they had burning itch and they had to put some foot... No, no. The Bible says because the ground they're standing on is holy. That's weird. Two times only two. One on Mount Sinai, one on the Mount of Olives.

Now you take your Bible and study after the Old Testament. You know what you got there? You got the route of the Ark of the Covenant from when Moses gets the Ten Commandments to build that ark and gets all that stuff going, and in the wilderness journey, they take right down through there that brings them right up into the east side of Jerusalem. You know what you got? You got a picture. You got a picture of the route that Christ is going to take at the second coming of Christ when He comes back. What a book! Mount Sinai, from Mount Sinai, they go across Sinai, through Edom, through Seir, going east to go in the right direction, going to the west, through Seir, through Paran, up the King's Highway, as it's called. My, my, my, what's this? The King's Highway, going east to west, up the east side of the Dead Sea, across Jordan, exactly the same spot that Christ is baptized on with John the Baptist. Just a coincidence? To Gilgal, from Gilgal to Jericho, from Jericho right to the Mount of Olives. You realize that the Mount of Olives faces the Eastern Gate, and when you walk out the Eastern Gate, you know what you see? You see the Mount of Olives. That Bible says that the ground splits when the Lord Jesus Christ steps off that horse and His foot touches the ground. The Mount of Olives splits asunder. Ezekiel 43:4 talks about those great eight chapters that talk about the second coming of Christ and the Millennial Reign of Christ, and it says that the glory of God goes into Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate. King of Kings, Lord of Lords.

VII. The Shut Eastern Gate: Ezekiel's Prophecy Fulfilled

You say, "Bob, that's so hard to believe." That's so hard to believe. Well, let me tell you something, I wouldn't want you to go home today in a believable state, so let me give you something even more harder to believe. Oh, you're going to like this. Maybe you won't. I like it, that's all that matters. Turn over to the book of Ezekiel. Oh, you want a great prophecy? You think I'm stretching all this? You think that the second coming of Christ isn't the most prevalent,

important doctrine in all history, that even the moves in the Bible in the same direction Christ is coming isn't prevalent? Let me show you something here. You're going to love this.

Ezekiel 44:1-2, one of the greatest prophecies on the second coming of Christ in all the Bible, yet it's probably the least known. You probably have never heard this before. All the more you need to keep coming and hear me preach. I'll tell you a thing you never heard before. Some of them are true, or some are not, but what's that got to do with it? They're all true. This one's true.

Ezekiel 44:1-2

1 Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut.

2 Then said the Lord unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, nor any man enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.

God says, "No man, except My Son, is going to come through that Eastern Gate." You know, all the time the Jews had Jerusalem, nobody went through that gate. They believed that prophecy. They believed that prophecy.

Along about 1500, a man is born. His name is Suleiman. He becomes a great king of the Ottoman Empire, the Turks, who literally have taken all of the Middle East. He's heralded in history as Suleiman the Magnificent. The people around him thought he was so great and looked at him as a god that they called him the Lawgiver, like God gave the Ten Commandments. They called him the Magnificent, like Christ. His reign over the Ottoman Empire spanned some 60, 70 years, and he built that empire, and he literally captured all of the Middle East.

But then in 1543, he went up against Jerusalem, and he said, "I'm God. I want Jerusalem." They all want Jerusalem. The devil, working through him, said, "I want it too. Go get it. You are the Magnificent. You're the Lawgiver. You fancy yourself to be God. I'm the real God, but go ahead, get it for me." So his armies go in, and they capture Jerusalem, and he's camped on the outside, and Jerusalem has fallen, and the Ottoman Empire has just taken the city of God. That Eastern Gate was closed.

Suleiman knew the prophecy. Suleiman knew exactly what the Bible said. That's why Jerusalem has been the interest of every demon-crazed Gentile king and philosopher and the devil himself for 6,000 years. You know what Suleiman said? He said, "Tomorrow, we're going into Jerusalem, and tomorrow, I'm entering the city through the Eastern Gate because I'm God. I'm the Lawgiver. I'm the Magnificent One. I'm going through that Eastern Gate. I'm going to sit down on that throne in Jerusalem, and I'll show him who's king."

Well, the best-laid plans of mice and men. He goes to bed that night. I don't know what he had to eat before he went to bed. Sounds like it was a double cheese pepperoni pizza with extra mango and sauce. But he had a terrible nightmare, and in that nightmare, it terrified him. This is history. Go to any public library, any place in the city, in the world, look it up. It's there. A terrible nightmare in a dream he has. He goes through that gate, and God is waiting on the other side, and God kills him. He wakes up in the morning, terrified, the great Magnificent, the great Lawgiver.

You know what he does? He orders his men to wall up the Eastern Gate, and in 1543, they walled it up, and there's never been a man go through it since. To this day, the Eastern Gate is walled up. You know why? It's reserved for somebody else. You can't beat that book. You can't beat history. You can't beat it. That prophecy is standing today that was given back in the book of Ezekiel, back in the post-captivity, back in 600 BC, and no one has gone through. It's reserved for the King. Suleiman died attacking in battle, never having gone through into Jerusalem. It's reserved.

VIII.Application: Living in Light of His Coming

You see, I gave you three tests.

- 1.) I gave you the test of spiritual growth: Can you take somebody really salt in your hide away with preaching? If you learn to like that, you're growing.
- 2.) I talked to you how to love the book: The test for that is, can you get through a day without reading it?
- 3.) Then I told you how to test for loving Christ: That is, if you had one prayer in your life, what would it be? Would it be, "Lord, come back," or "Lord, give me a new boat?"

You see, in the course of putting those three in your life, you learn something about God and the Word of God, and you realize the greatest doctrine in this world is the second coming of Christ, and the whole world is built around those three.

You know, in the Bible, when the Lord comes back, the Bible says that there's a Judgment Seat of Christ, that at some point in time, where it looks like that all of us take all the rewards that we get for what we've done down here on earth, and one by one, we walk up to the throne. This is going to take a thousand years itself. It may take a million years, but you bring those rewards that you got at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and you walk up and you lay them at the feet of Jesus, at the throne, and you step back and you say, "Lord, they're Yours. I did it because I loved You."

The tragedy of that is this: a lot of God's people won't have anything to give. In fact, there's an old song they used to sing years and years ago, they don't sing it anymore, but it went like this: "Oh, must I go in empty-handed?" A lot of God's people will, but you know what? There's no need to. In that Bible, the Bible talks about five crowns that you as a believer can get. Five of them. And they're so easy. That'd be a good question for somebody on Bible study. I'm not going to give them to you; you go look them up yourself. But I'll tell you what, one of them is one of the easiest. You know what the easiest one is? You get a crown for just loving His coming back. Who couldn't get that? I doubt most of God's people will ever get that one. Oh, you're anxious about your Aunt Jenny coming back, and you're anxious about getting this back or getting your dividend return back, but not too many people just get up in the morning just waiting for the Lord to come back. But there's a crown. There's a crown. Oh, what a day it's going to be.

You see, you know what a message like this does? And I know I've tried to jam a lot of Bible into an hour sermon, but I'm going to tell you, you can't go out here getting a picture that the bottom line is this: God has a program. You know what a message like this does? It puts it in perspective for you, because coming in here and leaving here, you probably came in here excited about one

thing, and you're leaving unexcited about something else. The Word of God has a way of just bringing it all to sharp focus. No matter how upset you get with me for what I say and how what I preach, the bottom line is, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, you're going to look back at me and say, "Bob, I wish I'd listened to you," because the bottom line is, it's true. It's true.

All history, all history is built around the nation of Israel, and all history points to one event: the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ at the second coming of Christ. Everything in history, everything in the Bible, and everything in our lives, and the preaching of this from this pulpit and this church will always be second coming of Christ centered. That doesn't mean I'll preach on it every time, but it means every time I stand in this pulpit, you can be assured that I am looking for Him to come back.

I've got five crowns. Do you even know what they are? Do you even know where to find them? I'm going to give you a hint: the one for loving His appearing is in 2 Timothy 4:8. It says God's going to give a crown when He appears to them that love His appearing. You can get that one just like that. At least have one. It's going to be a day of reality.

And yet I say that, and I know, saying that, honest to goodness, I believe that what I'm about to say, I'm not just saying it, I believe that in this room, probably 99.9999%, if not all of you, are doing the very best you can to get where God wants you to be. Maybe you're not there yet. Maybe you know, but you know what? You're here this morning, and you're putting up with me, and you come back on Thursday night, other than the ones that have to work and can't get here, and I understand that. You know what? You love God, and you're here because you want to learn. I'm not saying you're perfect, and I'm not saying you don't have some problems. You all got problems.

God looks at your attitude of heart. You know what? If God would come right now, right now, and you got saved last week, or you were saved a long time ago, and you were just, and sometime this week you said to God, "God, I heard what Bob said Sunday, and I was there Thursday night, and Lord, I know I haven't done what I need to do. I know I've got a lot of problems, but I want to tell you something, I want to be everything You want me to be. God, You've got to help me. There ain't a lot of time left. I know I've got a lot to learn, but Lord, I want to." If God would come five seconds after you ended that prayer, you know what? You'd have to give you everything that you would have got if you would have done what you just said, because God doesn't do it. God gives you based on your attitude of heart.

If you can go through this life loving Him honestly and loving that book, that's why I gave you the three little tests. That's why you've got to love good, hard preaching. It keeps your heart right. That's why you ought to love the Word of God more every day. That's why you ought to love God more than anything else in this life, with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul, and all your strength, because it's those attitudes of heart that get you everything with God.

God's people preaching today is so far removed from that. We're talking about stuff that is irrelevant to your life and irrelevant to where you are in your walk with God. Preachers today are just going to the internet, getting some sermon that sounds classy and social, and just laying it out. Hey, I'm telling you something, when I stand here in front of you, you can bet, you're

guaranteed of one thing: I've spent at least nine, I've spent at least nine, ten, twelve, fifteen hours this week getting something from God that's going to mean something in your life. When I get up here, I mean, I'm not the most honest guy in the world, but when I come to this book, I am. I just tell you, if I'm not going to preach the truth to you and do the work to give you one, find somebody else to do it that will, because I'm not. When I stand up here, I realize one thing: I'm going to give an account someday for everything I preach. Maybe some guys don't believe that. I believe it because I believe this book. I believe it, and I believe He's coming back, and I believe we've got a short time, and I believe that that's why we need to band together and do what we can do in these last days, that we stand there, that at least, at least when we have to walk in the throne room, we don't have to go in empty-handed. He's coming. He's coming. He's coming.

Last prayer in the Bible: "Even so, come, quickly, Lord Jesus."