

# Romans 10:19-21; Romans 11:1-36    Sunday 10/4/2009

SEC: The Importance of Romans and Israel's Place

Remember last week we saw how the Gentiles received the message of the Gospel. Today we are going to come to the end of Romans chapter 10. We are going to finish it up and we are going to move into Romans chapter 11. Romans chapter 11, without a doubt, is the greatest chapter in the New Testament that deals with the restoration of the nation of Israel.

You will remember that when we started the book of Romans, I told you how vitally important the book of Romans is. We have taken our time with Romans, and we basically have come through it one section at a time. I think that it is absolutely vital that you learn this great book. I told you when we started how even the placement of the book is incredibly important. We find when we open up what is commonly called the New Testament in your Bible, four historical books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, basically for those of you that know your Bible, are still in the Old Testament. We know that the Bible says in the book of Hebrews that the New Testament does not go into effect until the death of the testator. That basically would put everything in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John up to the death of Christ in an Old Testament scenario. We certainly know that God is dealing with the nation of Israel in those four books. They are told in Matthew chapter 10 when Christ sends the twelve apostles out, He clearly tells them that they are not to go to the way of the Gentiles. They are not even supposed to go to the Samaritans, which are half Jew and half Gentile. But He tells them very clearly that they are to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Then we begin to see after Christ's death on the cross, we begin to see after His resurrection, we come to the book of Acts. The book of Acts is another historical book. The book of Acts, as we have talked about many, many times, is a book that really is a bridge. It brings you from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John into the church age, or more appropriately, the book of Romans. We find in the book of Acts the events taking place where God finishes up dealing with the nation of Israel by Acts chapter 7, and then we move into the Gentile church. We find the transition, I have showed you very, very many times, and it is the way to really understand the book of Acts. No sooner is God finished in Acts chapter 7 with the stoning of Stephen than in chapter 9 the Apostle Paul gets saved and we see the Gospel going to the Gentiles. From that point on, we find the establishment of the Gentile churches.

It is very important that you understand why the book of Romans is the next book. Because the next book in the order of the books in your New Testament lays out for you everything that you and I need to know about what God is doing in the church age. You have heard me say it many, many times: the job of every Christian, male and female, once you get saved, is to start a process in your life by which you look at everything in life, cease looking at it from your own perspective, and begin to see it from God's perspective. Of course, understanding the church, its function, its mission, and all that God has for it is vitally important, and that is what the book of Romans does.

I told you that the book of Romans breaks down into basically four sections. Remember I told you that there is a historical section. I told you that there is a doctrinal section, and I told you about that there is a prophetic section, and then there is a practical section. We talked about how that in chapter 1 he gives us a mindset of how the Gentiles think. In Romans chapter 2, he then contrasts the way the Gentiles think with the way the Jews think. When he comes to chapter 3, he shows how that the Gentiles who follow their conscience and the Jews who follow the law, he shows us very clearly that neither one of those are going to get God's righteousness anymore by following that procedure. Then he opens up chapters 4 and 5, and he shows us in those two great chapters how that now if you want to get God's righteousness, the conscience that the Gentiles follow is no good anymore, and the law that the Jew followed is no good anymore. Now that Christ has come, if you want to get God's righteousness, whether you are Jew or a Gentile, you have got to get it through the death of Jesus Christ, God's Son, on Calvary's cross and through His shed blood.

Once we establish that fact in chapters 4 and 5, he moves into the great doctrinal chapters: chapter 6, chapter 7, and chapter 8. We went through those in great detail. In those great details, we saw how that each one of those chapters, 6, 7, and 8, deals with a specific issue that we need to understand in relationship to where we are at. Every heresy on this planet today and every source of bad teaching and everything that people are confused on about the salvation that God has given to the church will come down in the final analysis of not understanding Romans chapter 6, 7, and 8, so they are vital.

Then we moved into the next section, which is chapters 9, 10, and 11. I told you in those three chapters that God now wants to show you and me, the church, what He is doing with the nation of Israel. I do not know of a more important doctrine for where we are at in the world today, and you are going to see this by the time we are done this morning. I do not know of a more critical time that you and I live in to understand what is going on in chapter 9, chapter 10, and chapter 11.

In chapter 9, we saw that God showed us who Israel was. We saw that God laid out the nation of Israel, what His plan was for them. We see also what God did for them, how He orchestrated everything in their life, everything as a nation. Then we saw what they did to God and how they rejected everything that God did for them. We saw in chapter 10, because of that rejection, God then went to the Gentiles. That is where we have been. We saw that Romans chapter 10 is the greatest single chapter anywhere in the Bible that talks about how you and I get saved. We talked about the great verses where it says:

*Romans 10:9-10*

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

Last week we ended another section in there, and I showed you how God deals with the Gentiles. I showed you a brief presentation of the Gospel and the stars, how there are three things that declare the glory of God on this world. One of them is the Bible, the other one is Jesus Christ, who is the visible appearance of the invisible God, and then the third one was the heaven that declared the glory of God. You should have a better understanding now as we talked about that.

Today we are going to look at the last section in Romans chapter 10, and that is going to be verses 19 through 21. We are going to see that this part of the Word of God is getting us ready to move into the next section. Let us begin reading today, let us back up a little bit and pick it up in verse 17, even though we are going to be focusing on verses 19 through 21. Let us follow what it says then:

*Romans 10:17-18*

*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

*But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.*

Now that is where we focused last week. Now we are going to pick it up in verse 19.

*Romans 10:19-21*

*But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.*

*But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.*

*But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

Now Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus today, and we thank You, Father, for the Word of God that, Lord, if we would just believe it, if we could just obey it, if we could just do with it what You intended for it to do in our lives, our lives would be so much better. We would be so much farther along if we could just stay focused on this one concept, the Word of God, that helps us make the decisions we have to make in life. Father, I pray today that You will give us what we need to look at this and to understand it, and Father, we will put everything in the proper context that You might have the honor and glory from it all. In Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

SEC: God's Jealousy and Israel's Provocation

I want to draw your attention to verse 19 first here, and it says this: "But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you."

Sometime, if you want to take, I think one of the greatest word studies you will ever take in the Bible is the word jealousy. What he is saying here is this, and he is making some reference to the

Old Testament. I will give you some of these and you can get them yourself. Sometimes write these down:

- Numbers 25:11
- Deuteronomy 32:16
- Deuteronomy 32:21
- 1 Kings 14:22
- Psalm 78:58
- Ezekiel 16:42

Now that is just a very small number or an accounting of passages that basically show you in the Old Testament how Israel provoked God to jealousy. How did Israel provoke God to jealousy? That is an excellent Thursday night question. Well, you do not have to wait Thursday night for me to answer it. Here is how they did: They did it by God giving them everything that He gave them, telling them that He wanted to be their God and He wanted them to be His people. He told them that they were His nation, that He had great plans for them, and He wanted to be the only one in their mind, in their heart, and in their soul. Of course, what did Israel do? Israel went after all the other gods.

These verses that I just gave you, and you take a concordance and look up the word jealousy in the Old Testament, you will find time after time after time where the Bible says Israel provoked God to jealousy. They provoked Him to jealousy by going after the other gods after He told them that "thou shalt have no other God before me." They provoked Him to jealousy by worshipping graven images. When He told them they should not make any graven image, He gave them their children for a heritage, to make the nation of Israel the greatest nation on the face of this planet. What did they do? They got involved in Baal worship that has to do with human sacrifice. They got involved with the fire of Molech and the god of Hinnom. In the concept of the fire of Molech, which you read in the Bible, Molech was the fire god. The nation of Israel would actually take their children and offer them as a sacrifice to Molech. Molech was a gigantic brazen god that had a hollow stomach with mechanical hands. They stoked and built a fire inside Molech. Then they laid those babies in the hands of Molech, and as the babies screamed from the heat and the hot of those hands that were heated by the fire, they all praised Baal and cranked the handles and the arms went up and the baby went into the belly. That is what you find in your Bible when you find what talks about passing through the fire of Molech.

You go to Jerusalem today, you go down there in the Valley of Hinnom. The Valley of Hinnom is also called Gehenna. In Christ's time, it was a trash dump. We talked about this Thursday night. It was a trash dump that is likened to hell in the Bible. But in the Old Testament times, Gehenna, what is the modern day or in Jesus' time trash dump, was the place where they worshipped the fire of Molech. God put a curse on that place that through the rest of the Bible it was a place of death, destruction, and burning. In fact, the Bible makes a reference to hell where he talks about the worm that "dieth not" like we talked about in Isaiah 66, which is a reference back to that place called Gehenna.

So when you see all of that and you understand that the nation of Israel provoked God to jealousy. Now what you have here is that God is turning the tables. God was a God to them and gave them everything, and they rejected Him. So what He is saying here now is the fact that Israel provoked God to jealousy, so now God is going to turn the tables and God is going to provoke Israel to jealousy. How did He do that? By forsaking the Jews and taking the Gospel to the Gentiles.

You know why Jews do not like us? I mean, a real Orthodox Jew will not give us the time of day. Oh, I know you say, "Well, I went to the Holy Land and they were really nice." Sure they were. They were ripping you off every time you turned around. They were selling you pieces of the cross. They were selling you holy oil that they had of the alabaster box. They were selling you everything in the world over there, and dumb, stupid Christians. They were taking you down to the Holy Sepulchre and showing you where Christ, you know, the cave that Christ was in, and they showed you the place where He was crucified, and all of that stuff has nothing to do with the real place He was crucified and only took off. They just rip you off. They hate Gentiles. They do not want anything to do with us. You know why? Because they are jealous. They may not understand jealousy. You know what? In a practical sense, most people get jealous of other people. They do not understand why they are jealous. But jealousy is a terrible thing, and they provoked God to jealousy, and that is even a more terrible thing because God then provoked them to jealousy by taking the Gospel and going to the Gentiles, and that is what He is saying here. That is what He is saying.

He said, "Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people." That is us Gentiles. "And by a foolish nation." That is all the Gentiles in a congregation of a nation. "I will anger you." "But Isaiah is very bold and saith, I was found of them that sought me not." That is you and me, Gentiles. "I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." That is you and me. That is you and me.

Verse 21 is a reference to Isaiah chapter 65. Let us turn over there and read that one. Isaiah chapter 65, verse 2, because this sets up a great, great, great concept and a great principle that you and I need to understand this morning.

*Isaiah 65:1-2*

*I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.*

*I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;*

"A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens," this is Israel now, "and burneth incense upon altars of brick." You want to notice the word brick there? Bricks in the Bible, like Genesis chapter 10 and 11 of the Tower of Babel. Bricks in the Bible always stand for a man-made religion. Whenever an altar was made in the Bible, whenever God made something in the Bible, it was made out of stone. You see, stone is God-made. Bricks are man-made. So when they made the Tower of Babel back there, the Bible tells you that they used

brick for stone. You know why? Because the Tower of Babel is a picture of a man-made religion. Just one of those things you learn about coming through the Bible.

And he says, "Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the mountains of monuments; which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things in their vessels; Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day. Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom."

You are talking about there of God just telling them that He went to the Gentiles, and He went to the Gentiles because the nation of Israel did all of these abominations. But look at verse 2: "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people." That is what he is quoting up there in Romans chapter 10, verse 21.

When you look at all of the, and this is what most people cannot see, and this is what most people get messed up in when they come to the Bible and the nation of Israel. This is why God takes three chapters to lay all this out for you, so you and I do not get messed up on it as part of the church. Boy, most of the churches are messed up on it today. And that is God's eternal love for Israel. God is angry at Israel. God is going to put Israel through the greatest time and the greatest disaster this world has ever seen. But the Bible says that God's eternal love for Israel is the fact that God, after it is all said and done, is going to restore the nation of Israel to Himself. Israel is likened to an unfaithful wife, but God wants her restored unto Him.

You know, it is things like this and these concepts that make up the fundamentals of the Bible. A lot of people, they know a lot of exciting things about the Bible. They know the book of Revelation, you know, and they spend time going through all of the deep things in the Bible. But when their own personal issues come into life, they cannot function. You know why? Because they focused on all of the deep things, but they do not have the foundational things in the Bible. It is things like this that show you some of the basic foundational truths of the Bible once you grasp them, as God is dealing with the nation of Israel in a concept of God restoring them. It is things like this that make the foundation that everything else in the Bible is built on.

You talk about eternal security. You know, what an issue people have with that today. And yet the very fundamental issue of eternal security for you and for me lies in the fact that no matter what Israel did to God, no matter how he provoked God to jealousy, and no matter how God then went to the Gentiles and provoked Israel to jealousy, it was all to bring Israel back. You know, as a child of God, you may go through, and I have told you many, many times about the parallels between the nation of Israel and you and me. When Israel got out of fellowship and did not do what is right, God took her to the woodshed. When you and I do not do what is right with the Word of God, God takes us to the woodshed. Why? Because He wants to make us suffer? Because He wants to make us, you know, send us to hell? No. In both cases, it is the same concept. He wants to restore us.

The great character qualities of God. We talk about God's goodness. God's goodness toward Israel is unparalleled. We talk about God's ability to forgive the nation of Israel, regardless of what Israel has done. We talk about the word long-suffering, and that simply means that you suffer long with somebody or some situation. Of course, these are the great things that deal with the nation of Israel and God dealing with them. They form the foundation for the very things that you and I believe in as a New Testament Christian.

Romans chapter 10, verses 19 through 21, basically brings us through a transition, going from chapter 10, closing it out, moving it into chapter 11, which starts the great process of God restoring the nation of Israel. Romans chapter 11, without a doubt, ladies and gentlemen, is the greatest chapter in all of the Bible on the restoration of the nation of Israel as far as the church's understanding of it.

#### SEC: Theological Errors Regarding Israel's Restoration

One of the things that all the non-Biblical churches and denominations all hold to. There is, you know, when you study all the different religions, and I am not talking about so much, you know, the Muslims in the Far East religion, I am talking about the American denominations and the American churches and the American cults. When you lay it all out and you put them side by side, they all have very many things that they all disagree. When you look at them from an outward thing, they all look different. But when you study them from a focused standpoint, they all pretty much look the same.

Every one of them that I know of teaches baptism for salvation. They are running back to Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, or over there to John chapter 3. They all deny the visible return of Christ and adopt an amillennialism position or a post-millennialism position. But the key one is, and every one of them follow this, they all believe that in one way or the other that they have taken the place of the nation of Israel, and they all believe that God is finished with the Jew.

I cannot think of a worse mistake any single individual can make. I cannot think of any more blunderous, disastrous position a Christian or a church could hold to come to the point where you think God is done with Israel and then much more thinking you have replaced the nation of Israel. That is the height of arrogance and also the height of stupidity when it comes to understanding the Scriptures.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that they have replaced the nation of Israel. Do you ever go to the Roman Catholic Church Mass? Have you ever talked to a, watched their religion? You know what they do? They bring in a bunch of Old Testament stuff. I mean, they have all the little rinky-dinky things that they had in the nation of Israel. The priests come down waving this little thing with a censer in it, just like the Old Testament priests did. They have all of the vessels and all of the gold and overlaid stuff. They have an altar up there that is like the tabernacle. They have everything that you see except they are in the New Testament. You know why? Because they have brought all of the stuff out of the Old Testament into the New Testament and put it in their church. You know why? Because they believe that they have taken the place of the nation of Israel. That is where they are at. They believe that they have taken the place of the nation of Israel. It was until Vatican II, just some 20 years ago or 25 years ago, whatever it was, where one

of the popes actually absolved the nation of Israel for killing Christ. That was big of them. The truth of the matter is, the Jews did not kill Christ. They were just the instruments by which the devil used and God used to bring about your salvation. You know what? Put Him on that cross, your sins and mine. I mean, you think somebody could figure that out. For years and hundreds and hundreds of years the Roman Catholic Church killed the Jews, persecuted the Jews, called them Christ killers because of the fact that they thought that God was finished with the nation of Israel. Of course, He is not finished with it. He is not finished with the nation of Israel.

The Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church, the Episcopal Church, the Church of England or Anglican Church, whatever you want to call it, they all deny Israel's restoration. They do not believe in a literal return of Christ. They believe that again they are going to make the world a better place. They are all in the social gospel business. They talk about, you know, do unto others and give this and help this and do all of that, and all that is good. But they actually think that they are going to get the world to a place that is acceptable to God by their good deeds and their good works and then Christ is going to come back. He is coming back, but not because they got the world the way it is supposed to be.

What we call the American cults. We are calling them the American cults because they, I do not know what you know about American Christianity, but once America was founded with the Pilgrim Fathers, you will find that over the next, well even up to where we are at today, you will find that, I told you the other day, the Gospel moves east to west. You will find across this country moving east to west from the founding of the Pilgrim Fathers around 16-whatever up to the time we live in it, you will find what the Bible calls in church history, you can read about it all the time, seven great awakenings. Seven great awakenings or seven awakenings of the Holy Spirit of God, revivals across this country, and they start on the east coast and they move to the west coast. We are seeing the last remnants of the great last seventh awakening. It was not much of an awakening, but we are seeing the last, you know, preachers get up and they talk about, "Well, I believe there can be one more great revival in America." Not if you know your Bible. America, there is going to be no revival in America. You cannot have revival without the truth, and America got rid of the truth over 100 years ago. There is no revival coming, no revival at all. But that is what happens when you do not know your Bible, you do not know history.

Along with those seven great awakenings, remember I told you in the Bible basis class how that all history is God moving in a direction to do something and the devil moves to cut it off. Well, seven great awakenings produced seven demonic American cults, and you know, they are what we call the American cults.

- Jehovah Witnesses
- Mormons
- Seventh Day Adventist
- Unitarianism
- Church of Christ
- Christian Science
- The Charismatic Movement

Now I am going to put the Charismatic Movement over here for a moment because these six that I gave you are all for unsaved people. They come up in American history. You could not find a Jehovah Witness in 1500 with a laser beam and a flashlight. There is somebody walking around talking about, "Well, you know what, we did this and we did that and we believe this and we believe that and you are all wrong." Hey, you could not find a Jehovah Witness in 1100, 1200, 1300, 1400, 1500, 1600, 1700, 1800, about 1830. Bang! Here it is. No history.

*Psalm 127:1*

*Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*

You have no history. You have nothing. I have always thought about if you are a Roman Catholic or you are a Methodist or you are an Episcopalian, and I do not like to make jokes about anybody dying and going to hell because I do not think it is a funny thing. But the truth of the matter is in relationship to what we are talking about, if you are a Roman Catholic and you die and bust hell wide open, if you are an Episcopalian and you die and bust hell wide open, it is like going to hell in a Cadillac. I mean, look at it this way. You have all the pomp and circumstance. You have all the stuffed people, all this stuff and beautiful churches and all this stuff. I mean, you die and go to hell, but it is like going to hell in a Rolls Royce. I always thought with the funny, and I do not know what it is like in hell. I mean, I do not think there are any jokes in hell, but I always thought people that went to hell, you know, I mean, can you imagine going to hell as a Jehovah Witness? I would be like going to hell in a Volkswagen with the engine stolen out of it. I mean, at least if you go to hell as a Catholic, you have some history behind you. I mean, what can you say if you are a Catholic? I guess you could say, "Well, you know what? I was the oldest church, it has been around forever, and it was this, this, this, and they had all this stuff, and I thought all of that was all beautiful." And he would say, "That is all true, but you are still going to hell." What do you say if you are a JW? Oops.

Those are the American cults. You know what every one of them have in common? They all believe that they have taken the place of the nation of Israel. Why do you think the Jehovah Witnesses talk about the 144,000 being them? You know why? Because they take the place of the nation of Israel. Why do you think the Seventh-Day Adventists meet on Saturday? Because they take the place of the nation of Israel. I mean, what do you think the Mormons do what they do when they talk about building a tower over here where Christ is going to come back and he built that big tower so he can find the landing zone? Let me tell you something. If your God needs a landing tower to find where he needs to hit ground zero, you better check your God out. And while you are at it, check your landing lights. I do not make your gears up.

Then you have the Charismatic group. Now the Charismatic group may be a saved group, but they are as much of a cult as anybody else of these groups. They are the last. The last great awakening in America started about 1950, and the Charismatic movement was well on its way to taking the power out of that one and certainly did. Now the Charismatic group, where all the other cults, they will run to Acts 2:38, and they will take Acts 2:38, which says, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin. He shall receive the gift of the Holy

Ghost." They use that for salvation. See what a Charismatic does, he goes to that verse and because he is a Christian cult, he spiritualizes the passage. Where the other cults say that is baptism for salvation, he says after you are saved that is baptism to get the Holy Spirit. Shall we know this? Same thing, same thing, same thing. They spiritualize the passage and they make it to a church as a spiritual thing called the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Then they steal the sign gifts that were given to the nation of Israel, try to apply them into the church. Same system, same system.

In your Bible, ladies and gentlemen, there are seven things that a child of God is told not to be ignorant of. We have taught them. They are on the website. You can get them back there. Seven things that a child of God is told not to be ignorant of, and you might know they are the exact seven things that God's people are ignorant of. One of them is Romans chapter 11, where we are going to start next week, that deals with the restoration of the nation of Israel. Now how could you miss that? I mean, if you did not get it there, you know what I told you before that there are seven things that you and I as a child of God. We talked about stewardship, remember? There are seven things that you and I as a child of God are to be stewards over. In Matthew chapter 20, one of them is the nation of Israel. How would you miss that? How would you miss that you and I as the church are to be stewards over not only the other six things but a steward over the nation of Israel?

You ever see in John chapter 19? I do not know what you read or I do not know what you study. Maybe you do not read, maybe you do not study anything. I do not know. But you ever see in John chapter 19 when Christ was hanging on the cross? On there at His feet was His mother Mary. You know who Mary is a type of in the Bible? She is a type of the nation of Israel. Right next to Mary was John, the Apostle John. You know who John is a type of? He is a type of the church. Remember in John chapter 19 when He is hanging on the cross? He looked down and saw His mother, a type of the nation of Israel, and John standing next to her as a type of the church. What did He say? He said, "Woman, behold thy son!" And He gave His mother Israel for the watch care of John, type of the church. How do you miss those things? Unless you just got your whole day filled up in a Rubik's cube or something. I do not know. Ignorance of these seven things will land you in one of the above cults.

SEC: God's Eternal Love and Restoration of Israel

The Old Testament is filled with references of God sending His people into the heathen lands in the nations, but then calling them back out and restoring them. I am going to read you some of them. You do not have to turn these. Maybe you just want to write them down. I do not think you will be able to turn as fast as I can read.

*Isaiah 54:5-7*

*For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.*

*For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.*

*For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.*

Look at that thing. "For a small moment I forsaken." That is 2,600 years. 2,600 years. 2,600 years is just a small moment with God. I told you a couple of Thursday nights ago about the young guy that had a conversation with God. He says to Him, "God," he says, "what is a million years like to You?" God says, "Well, a million years is just like a second." The kid said, "Wow." He says, "God, what is a million dollars like to You?" God said, "Well, a million dollars is just like a penny." Thought for a moment. I said, "Hey, God, can I have a penny?" God looked back and said, "Yeah, just a second." Time with God. 2,600 years, what a moment.

Boy, I see those things. I see things like that. And I look at the judgment seat of Christ, which takes place during the Tribulation Period. It runs for seven years. But up there, there is no time as we know it. And I think that my thing, that thing, that judgment seat of Christ, that judgment seat of Christ, if 2,600 years is just a moment of time, what must seven years be with God? That judgment seat of Christ could take 10,000 years. How about the Great White Throne Judgment? You see, we see those events and we learn them in Bible basic class and you hear me talk about them on Thursday night and we run around and we get the idea and the concepts in our head. You realize that the Great White Throne Judgment, every man and woman that ever lived in the history of the world who dies without Christ is going to stand there before God one at a time. You realize that thing could take 100 million years? It is not like we have got any place to go. But I mean, God's timing is not like our time frame. He said, "In a moment of time," 2,600 years, "have I forsaken thee. But with great mercies," here it comes, "will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer."

Look at Jeremiah 23:3:

*Jeremiah 23:3*

*For I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.*

Look at Jeremiah 31:10:

*Jeremiah 31:10*

*Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off; and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.*

Now remember I told you in the Bible where the Bible is addressed to three groups of people. Some places it is written to the Jew, some places it is written to the church, and some places it is written to the Gentiles. Mark it down. Here is one, it is written to the Gentiles. He is not talking to the nation of Israel and he is not talking to the church. He is talking to the nations. Those are Gentiles. That is one of those places. "Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off; and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he."

Look at Jeremiah 32:37:

*Jeremiah 32:37*

*Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely:*

"And they shall be my people, and I will be their God." Literally scores and scores and scores of places in the Old Testament that said God scattered him into the other Gentile nations. God turned His back on them. God was angry with them. But every one of them also says that someday God is going to restore them. That is Romans chapter 11. It shows that God's hand is stretched out to Israel and He is going to restore them.

Let me tell you something. The key character quality of God is forgiveness and restoration. I do not know what to tell you. The only reason you and I got saved is because God stretched out His hand and forgave us and then restored the fallen image. That is why it is called regeneration in the Bible. You once had an Adam and lost an Adam, so you have got to get regenerated. You know what God had to do? He had to forgive you and restore you. You know what He is going to do with Israel? He is going to forgive them and He is going to restore them. Now the process is different, but that is the greatest character quality that God has. You know what the greatest character quality of a church is? The restoration and forgiveness process. You know what the greatest, if the greatest character quality of God is forgiveness and restoration in our own lives, what ought to be our greatest character quality as a child of God? You see how that thing works? You see, unsaved people cannot get it when it comes to Israel. God's people cannot get it when it comes to the brethren. It lays down the fundamental concept of the doctrine of restoration.

SEC: The Fig Tree Parable and Israel's Rebirth

Allow me this morning, if I could for just a moment, to set all this up for you in a historical and biblical format as an introduction to Romans chapter 11 and closing out this transition coming through it of God restoring the nation of Israel.

If you have your Bibles this morning, and I know you do, turn over to Matthew chapter 24. Let us go to that place next. You have heard me talk about this passage before, and it is certainly no secret to most of you. Matthew chapter 24 is probably one of the most definitive chapters in all of the Bible. There is so much, and you know when I talk about a definitive chapter, a definitive chapter is a chapter or a verse or a passage or sometimes a word that defines the context. You want a definitive passage on the Tribulation Period that has all the keys and the Second Coming of Christ? Matthew chapter 24. I do not know of another passage that is more potent than this one. It is an incredible passage. I want to read all the way down through verse 31 here, and I want you to follow along in your Bible. If you do not have a Bible, look on the person next to you, and if you are bigger than they are, just rip it out of their hands and say, "Go get your own."

*Matthew 24:1-31*

*And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.*

*And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

*And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*

*And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.*

*For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*

*And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*

*For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.*

*All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

*Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*

*And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.*

*And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*

*And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

*But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*

*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)*

*Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:*

*Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:*

*Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.*

*And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!*

*But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:*

*For then shall be great tribulation, such as not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

*And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

*Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.*

*For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*

*Behold, I have told you before.*

*Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.*

*For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

*For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*

*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:*

*And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

*And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

I am telling you, this is one of the greatest passages anywhere in the Bible as a definitive passage. If you want to understand the Tribulation and the Second Coming, if you want to understand all of those things as far as prophecy, this is your chapter to define it. The Bible is filled with those things. I have told you many, many times that when you read the Old Testament, I do not care where you are at, especially in the prophets. But if you read the Old Testament in a doctrinal sense, if you read the Old Testament from a doctrinal sense now is going to be one of three things. I mean when you read the Old Testament, and you know when I was growing up and I was learning the Bible, to me the doctrinal thing was always the hardest thing to see. I would see I go to Bible study, hear these guys talk about what that is the Second Coming of Christ, and that is the millennium. And I would say, "How in the world do you get that out of there?" I mean, I did not get that. To me, the doctrinal application was always the hardest for me to grasp. Some 35 years later, I look at it now and it is the easiest thing for me to grasp. But you know why it is? Because I learned that learning those applications was based on a few simple rules that I did not know at the time.

One of the rules is this: When you are reading the Old Testament, especially the prophets, whatever you are reading in the Old Testament from a doctrinal prophetic standpoint, whatever you are reading, whatever story you are going through, it will be a picture of one of three things. Not four, not five. It limits it, one of three things.

- The Tribulation Period
- The Second Coming of Christ
- The Millennial Reign of Christ

Now you want to narrow it down from there? How do you find within those three which one it is? Key words. Some of you, most of you have read my book, \*How to Study the Bible\*, a book that has sold well under a million copies. You know that I have a whole section there devoted to key words in the Bible. I do not know of another passage anywhere in the Scriptures that gives you more key words per line than this one. Very quickly, and I am not going to spend a lot of time with this because I want to be done by four o'clock today, but let me show you some of them.

Now the first thing I want you to see is this. Verse 2. The disciples come out there and they stay in, Jesus says, they are looking at the temple. And He is saying there is not going to be one stone left on this. Now that has got their curiosity up, and why should not it? Now He is talking about the final destruction during the Tribulation Period of the temple. If you were talking to a Catholic, you were talking with a Jehovah Witness or a Church of Christ, or you talk to one of those cults, you know what they tell you that is? They would tell you that is a destruction that Titus brought in in 70 A.D. when he destroyed Jerusalem. That would be true from a historical sense because when Titus came down in 70 A.D., he did destroy the temple. But Jesus is not talking about Titus here. He is going way beyond Titus. But when you do not believe that God is going to restore the nation of Israel, then you do not go any farther. That is why they stop where they are at because they think they are the Jews.

Now the second thing I want you to see is in verse 3. He is sitting on the Mount of Olives. That ought to be your first key. You know why that is so important? Because at the Second Coming of Christ, He comes back to the Mount of Olives. Zechariah chapter 14 makes it very clear that when He comes back, He comes back on the Mount of Olives. That ought to be your first key. Well, anytime I find the Mount of Olives in the Bible, I stop and look at it. I look at that thing because that is where He comes back.

The third thing I want you to see is they ask Him two questions. The first question, and both are found in verse 3. The first question is, "What is going to be a sign of Thy coming?" That is question number one. The second question is, "And what is going to be the sign of the end of the world?" Here is the first thing you have got to realize. There are two questions in this passage. From this point on, He answers those two questions. The key to understanding it is the key words, and this is one of the most definitive passages anywhere found in the Word of God. From chapter 4, verse 4 through 31, He deals with a question on the issues of the end of the world.

Let us look at that one. We already saw the fact that He is talking about the destruction of the temple. We already saw that He is on the Mount of Olives. They ask what the sign is going to be to the sign of His coming and to the end of the world. All right, here is the key to the end of the world. Look down here in verse 6. You see that little word down there? It says, "but the end is not yet." Anytime you find the word "end" in your Bible, I do not care where it is at. Stop and look at it because that is always a reference to the end of the Tribulation Period.

Verse 9: "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." That is Revelation chapter 12, Revelation chapter 13. Look at verse 5: "...but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." You see, every charismatic in the world takes that and shows you you have got to keep on doing it or you will lose your salvation. Stupid, dumb charismatic does not even know that we are dealing with the Tribulation Period. You know why? Because he has stolen the promise to the nation of Israel. He has forsaken the nation of Israel and thinks they have come to him so he cannot get squat out of the passage. He thinks he is just talking about you and me. Anytime you find the phrase anywhere, any place in your Bible where somebody is told to endure or to endure to the end, the context is going to be the Tribulation Period.

Now look at verse 14. This is where the dumb, stupid, charismatic could not find his way out of it. He is as blind as a bat backing in backwards. Look at verse 13: "...but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached?" What is the Gospel of the Kingdom? I thought it was the glorious Gospel of the grace of God. What is the Gospel of the Kingdom? Charismatic could not explain the five Gospels in the Bible if his life depended on it. He does not know anything about the Bible. He thinks he is a Jew. He can raise the dead and heal the sick and give his life back to the blind, but he cannot figure out the book God gave him.

"Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains." Judea! How is that Kansas City? How is that Topeka? How is that Indianapolis? How is that Denver? In Judea, flee into the mountains. "Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house." Look at verse 21: Context, "For then shall be great tribulation." Look at verse 24: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets." Look at verse 27: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." You see that thing? East to West. East to West. Just like we talked about a couple of Thursday nights ago. Look at verse 30: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

You know what all that is? All that is a question. All that is the answer to the question that he talked about when he said what is going to be the end of the world. He gave you everything that you needed to see in that passage. Everything you need to see in that passage to show you the Jew the end of the world. The Jews in the Tribulation Period. I hear people all the time, you know, "Well, you know it is talked about earthquakes in divers places. You know since 1800 we have had a progressionally steady increase of earthquakes every year. That proves the great passage." Well, maybe we have had more earthquakes every year. I do not know. I do not care. The passage is not dealing with that. Those earthquakes in there are in the last three and a half years of the Tribulation Period. That is what that passage is dealing with. The Great Tribulation Period sets the context. The Great Tribulation is the second half of the Tribulation Period. Context. Context.

Then we have got a second question. The second question deals with the sign of Thy coming. That will be found in verses 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37. Two questions in this passage. It leads us right into where we are at today with the restoration of the nation of Israel.

Now look at verse 32 of Matthew chapter 24:

*Matthew 24:32-37*

*Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:*

*So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.*

*Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*

*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

*But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

Now if you do not already have that divided out in your Bible, you need to divide that out. You need to divide the last verses I just read from the first part of that chapter. You need to put a note in there that there are two questions in this chapter. One of them concerning the end of the world and the other one concerning the sign of His coming.

When we come to chapter 24, verse 32, we have got an incredible passage here. I was going through putting all my notes together and I laid this out and I came across an outline that I had written down many, many years ago. In fact, I remember preaching it vaguely maybe 25, back in the 80s. I am famous for hearing a guy preach and maybe one thing they will say in their sermon will click something in my mind and I will just take one little phrase that they said and I will see a whole sermon on it. But I do not even remember who was preaching it. Certainly I do not think it was on my own, maybe it was, I do not know. But I remember in my notes in my wide margin I had this little outline concerning the nation of Israel. I basically put this, and I give you this today as a kind of putting this all together for you. I am just simply down here that says:

- Dealing with Israel: Something I should see.
- Historical perspective: Something I should know.
- God's perspective: Something that you should watch.
- When they go back to the land.

What you have in Matthew chapter 24, verse 32, is probably the greatest single thing that is the sign of when Christ is coming back. Now I do not profess, nor does anybody else, to know when the Lord is coming back. Paul talks about understanding the times and the seasons. But Matthew chapter 24 shows you the time element that you are dealing with.

Of course, when we read this passage, we are talking about the budding of a fig tree. If you know anything about the Bible at all, you know in Jeremiah chapter 8, verse 13, Ezekiel chapter 36, verse 8, you know that Israel is likened to that fig tree. In fact, Ezekiel chapter 36, verse 8 talks

about the shooting out of the branches of the fig tree. You will know in the New Testament in Luke chapter 13, verse 6, and Matthew chapter 21, verse 19, and Mark chapter 11, verse 13, you will know that Israel, when Christ dealt with Israel, remember the time He came out after He looked at the fig tree and He went over and there were no figs on it and He cursed that fig tree. That fig tree will always be a picture of the nation of Israel historically. That fig tree has been barren for almost 3,000 years if you know your history. For 3,000 years the nation of Israel was barren. She was cast aside, "in a little moment I will forsake thee." 2,600 to 3,000 years depending on how you count it. At least 2,600 years she has been barren.

You remember the story I read you in Matthew, I hope you marked it down in Matthew chapter 21, verse 34, how God called out the nation, that great parable, how God called out the nation of Israel, how the Bible says that He hedged it about, He planted all the things around, He gave her everything she wanted, and then the Bible says when the time of the fruit drew near, remember that? He sent His servants to gather the fruit. Israel was put in the land, Israel was given everything that God wanted her to have for one purpose: to bear fruit. Oh, by the way, you and I were put on this planet for one purpose: to bear fruit. The parallels are incredible. Israel did not bear fruit. So when Christ comes out He curses the fig tree. And yet the Bible says when they ask Him what shall be the sign of Thy coming, He gives them the parable of the fig tree. What He simply says is this: He says that when you see Israel putting forth those leaves and beginning the process of bearing fruit, you know it is time.

A couple of Thursday nights ago we talked about Job chapter 41. I told you that Job chapter 40 and Job chapter 41 are the two greatest chapters in all of the Old Testament on the person of Satan. The two greatest chapters in the New Testament would be Revelation chapter 12 and Revelation chapter 13. In Job chapter 41, I told you the Bible says talking about the devil, "Who can discover the face of his garment?" Strange phrase. I laid it out that night simply like this. Did you ever go to a dinner, theater, party place, you know, where you go and you have dinner and they have a theater? Or maybe in your high school place? I do not know if you go to your kid's high school place, maybe you are in one. You know, even if you have been to a play in general, you know how it works. Curtain comes up, act one. They will play something else, play something out, scenery, curtain will come down, and then while the curtain comes down, band plays a little bit, everybody scurries around and changes the scenery. Curtain comes back up again, now they are at act two. Curtain comes down, they scurry around, change the background. Curtain comes up, act three, different background.

Well, in the Bible, as far as I am concerned, based on Job chapter 41, it says who can discover the face of his garment. The devil has seven garment changes throughout the history of the Bible and man. You want to track the devil? Find out where he changes his garments. Remember now, the garments is what shows you his face. The clothes that he has on at that particular point shows you who he is. People make the Bible a lot more complicated than I can deal with it. To me, the Bible has never been that complicated. I look at the Bible like a seven-act play. Every time the curtain comes down, the devil changes the scenery. When the curtain comes back up for act two, the scenery is all changed. But if you know your Bible and you understand the face of his garment, you can walk right through that seven-act play. By the way, seven garment changes,

seven acts of this play, we are at the end of act six, in case you do not know that. This play is almost over and we have not even had dinner yet.

Seven garment changes. Somebody said, "Hey, Bob, what is the next sign? I am excited about prophecy. Tell me, what is the next sign? What is the next sign that we have got to look for?" I have news for you. I am not looking for a sign. I am listening for a sound. There are no more signs. If you do not get anything else I say this morning when you leave here, understand this. The last sign that was given to this world was when the fig tree put forth its leaves. There are no more signs. We are getting ready to go into chapter 11. God wrote chapter 9 to show you how Israel screwed it up. Chapter 10, how I went to the Gentiles. Now we are transitioning back to chapter 11 because I am not looking for a sign for His coming. I am listening for the sound of that trumpet. It is going to take me out of here.

I want to say to you on the authority of the Word of God today, there are some things you should see this morning. There are some things we should know this morning, and there are certainly some things we should watch this morning. That passage over there in Matthew chapter 24, the budding of the fig tree is the nation of Israel becoming a nation again.

#### SEC: Historical Fulfillment of Prophecy

Allow me just a moment to show you the hand of God down through the Bible and down through history. One of the things that I think made the Bible bases class so successful, so many of you learning your Bible, was to understand a way that we correlated history and the Bible. That we took all the events that you have heard about all of your life and we put them in a logistical, understandable order that bottled them up to the events in history. It revolutionized so many of you. It gave you an appreciation for things that you, I have never seen a group of people grasp the concepts of the Bible as fast as many of you did. That is why I am excited to read your thesis papers.

I showed you God has had a plan, and in the Old Testament that plan revolves around the nation of Israel, does it not? When we study the Old Testament, oh I know there are lots of names, lots of places, and lots of things that happen, but you know what you basically have? You have God formulating a nation of people. By the time you get to Exodus chapter 12, you have God calling out that nation of people. By the time you get to David and Solomon in the Kings and Chronicles, you have God establishing that nation. By the time you get to the end of your Old Testament, you see that nation in a tailspin crash and burn right into the ground. That is all the Old Testament is. Do not get caught up with the names, places, and dates, or you better know them in your paper. Do not get hung up on that and get caught up in all the stuff that goes on. Understand that the Old Testament is about God formulating. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, everybody up to that point, God is putting the right people in the right place, doing the right thing, and the devil doing what he can do to stop them. Nothing stops God's plan. God formulates them. God calls them out. God establishes them. Then we watch them be a train wreck. We watch them implode.

What does God do? God in 606 B.C. puts them into the Gentile nations. We talked about those Gentile nations many times on Thursday night, and even on Sunday morning: Egypt, Babylon,

Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome, and then in the modern times, England, Russia, and then the good old U.S. of A. We see those in the book of Daniel, so clearly how the progression, because it is called the times of the Gentile. But again, we see, we see Israel doing all the wrong things, going after the other gods, provoking God to jealousy. So God sends Sennacherib, king of Assyria, down to the north side, and Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to the southern tribes. He takes them into captivity for 70 years. What happens? Israel and Nehemiah, a small remnant goes back. You know why that remnant goes back? The number is given. There is something like 46,000 or 48,000. I forget the exact number. There must have been 3 million, 4 million, 5 million Jews. Just a small remnant goes back. You know why? Because God wanted to ensure. God's hand is always outstretched to the nation of Israel. Even though He has forsaken them for a short moment, He wants to make sure that Jews are back in that homeland when the Messiah comes in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Oh, you have got to see it. You have got to see it.

If you want one of the greatest chapters, and I think it runs 72 or 74 verses, the greatest chapter on the end and the demise of the nation of Israel is Psalm 78. The end of the kingdom of heaven. Now the Gentile nations rule the world. Now the Jew has no homeland. Oh, a small remnant goes back in Ezra and Nehemiah, but they have no power. They are under the domination of Persia. Cyrus tells them what they can do. They try to rebuild the temple. They try to do all of the things. Did you ever notice back there in that passage when they had the second dedication of the temple under Ezra and Nehemiah that the old men wept? The old guys had been around and knew the Bible and knew about Solomon, how they wept and cried. Why would you weep and cry at the dedication of this temple? I will tell you why. Because it was an epitome of a disaster. When Solomon dedicated the temple, there was 100,000 sacrifices of oxen and cattle and sheep. 200,000 of this, 300,000 of that, 400,000 of this. The whole nation sacrificed to God, and there was over a million sacrifices given to God. In Ezra and Nehemiah, it is two chickens and a duck. Those old men knew the glory of Israel was gone. They wept because of what they once saw and now what they had. Oh, they are back in the land. They are not a free people.

You know Ezra and Nehemiah, you know Ahasuerus and all the things that go along with Zerubbabel and all those guys that try to provoke them and get them kicked out. Once Persia goes off, Greece comes on. Once Greece comes on, Rome comes on. Once Rome comes on, that brings us up to the First Coming of Christ. I do not know if you saw it or not. Maybe you have seen it before. Last Saturday night was one of my favorite movies, Ben Hur. How many saw it? How many have seen it in the past? How many do not give a flip about seeing it? Good. Now I know it is just a movie made by Hollywood, and I know that I think the thing I like about it, there is no, back then when you made a movie like that, they had to have 30,000 extras. Today you are just computer generated. To me there is just something about computer generated that is not real. Maybe it is the fact that it is not real. I do not know. But I mean you see things like \*The Ten Commandments\* and you see things like \*Ben Hur\* and you see all those thousands and hundreds of thousands of people. I mean incredible. Do you not notice that? It is built around the time of Christ. It is built around the fact that here is Judah Ben Hur. It is built around the fact that it is built on Michelangelo's painting of God reaching out to man. If you saw at the beginning the finger of God touching a finger of man. That is Michelangelo's painting in the Sistine Chapel up there. The modern version of it was E.T. and they replaced God with an alien and they had his

alien finger touching the man of God. That will be the last act of the play. We do not have time to get into that this morning but boy is it a good one.

It is all built around Rome. Rome is in power. The Jews are in the land but they have nothing, they are controlled over. But Romans tell them what to do. When Christianity became a threat the iron heel of Rome came down on them. They had nothing they could do. For 2,600 years they were a nation without a country. They were a group of people that had nothing. But at the time you get past Titus destroying them in 70 A.D., the Turks take over. They are kicked out of Jerusalem. Now the Muslims have it. It is an absolute disaster. It is an absolute terrible disaster. The Jews now are completely kicked out of the land. From 100 A.D. to 1900 A.D. they had no country. They had no land. The fig tree was barren, ladies and gentlemen. No country. No land. They were the vagabonds of this planet. They were persecuted by every religion. Every country. Spain had died on them. England banished them. France butchered them. Germany got rid of them long before Adolf Hitler showed up. 2,600 years. 2,600 years. 1,800 years from Christ.

Then, lo and behold, in the 1880s, right around 1900, a guy by the name of Theodore Herzl started a movement called the Zionist movement. When he started that Zionist movement, people around the world began to recognize the plight of the Jews. You know what? I know that God of the Bible is the God of history, and I know that history always repeats itself. That is why I know that this country is headed for an absolute disaster because they will not learn the lessons of history. We are in a war in Afghanistan, and I do not care if you send 40,000 troops. I do not care if you send 140,000 troops. I do not care if you send 40 million troops. You will never win in Afghanistan. You know what the name of Afghanistan is down through history? The graveyard of the empires. There has never been a nation on the face of this planet that defeated the Afghans. The British could not do it. Russia could not do it. And we will not do it. We do not learn those lessons. We make the same mistakes over and over and over again.

Yet in 1900, I see Theodore Herzl start the Zionist movement. 1900 A.D. Theodore Herzl is called the father of modern Israel. It is just by a wild stroke of coincidence in 1900 B.C., Abraham, who was the father of the nation of Israel, began to bring back the nation of Israel to the land God wanted him to have. In 1900 B.C., Theodore Herzl did it in 1900 A.D. God was on the move. God was on the move. God is going to do something. We are right in the middle of it. God's hand in gathering the nation of Israel from all the countries and all the nations that it had been scattered to was beginning to be fulfilled. In Isaiah 54, Jeremiah 23, Jeremiah 31, Jeremiah 32, all those passages we read, we see where God scattered them, but He brings them back.

On top of that, another great world event happened. In 1917, Lord Allenby, the Turks, the Muslims, the last of the Ottoman Empire, and of course you know about the Ottoman Empire, they come into power after the end of the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine Empire ran to about 1100, and the Ottoman Turks took over, and the Ottoman Empire ran all the way up to 1917. The Ottoman Turks got whipped, they took the wrong side in World War I, they went with Germany, and that pretty much broke their back. But in 1917, Lord Allenby of the British Army, England is the world power now. England has got everything she has got and every territory she has because England stood on a King James 1611 Authorized Version. Now it is about to change, but right now we are still in the green, about to go into black and then into the red.

The bottom line is this, Lord Allenby goes in and kicks the Turks out. Now England, the most powerful nation on the face of this planet, owns Jerusalem. It was at that time, talk about the hand of God, during World War I that a guy by the name of Chaim Weizmann, who was a Jew, developed some kind of smokeless gunpowder, believe it or not, from horse chestnuts. It helped the British win World War I. In 1917, in British Parliament, one of the great lords of that point by the name of Lord Balfour, a saved man, stood up in Parliament and put forth a declaration called the Balfour Declaration. The Balfour Declaration was a declaration put out by Lord Balfour to the British Commons and the British Parliament that now that they had Jerusalem because of what Weizmann had done to help them, and he read out of a King James 1611 Authorized Version that that land belonged rightly to the Jew and that land should be given back to the nation of Israel. They passed that, it went into the Parliament, it passed the Parliament, and the Balfour Declaration came into being. But the Jews were not ready. Through all the political wrangling that went on, God stalled that off because God's timing was not ready for that. The Jew was not ready for that.

You see, the Jew had settled in Europe through the 1800s. There is one thing about a Jew, he has got this survival mode in him. He will survive when others starve to death. He will make money when you and I are in the depression line. After World War I, I do not know if you know how bad the economic depression got into Europe, particularly in Germany. In the 1920s, it took a hundred million Reichsmarks to buy one loaf of bread. It was an incredible thing. But the Jew had the money to buy up whole city blocks in Europe. Well, when they went to the concentration camps in 1940, you know what one of the biggest enterprising things they did? They extracted the gold fillings out of the Jews' teeth after they killed them. Sometimes before they killed them. I have got pictures of bushel baskets full of gold teeth. Here is the Jew living in Europe in the 20s. Whole Europe is in a depression. A hundred million Reichsmarks to buy a loaf of bread. They have money to put gold in their teeth.

Ever hear of the Warsaw Ghetto? Warsaw Ghetto is only the most famous one. You know what the Warsaw Ghetto was, Warsaw being in Poland? When the Germans wanted to do the final solution and wipe out the nation of Israel, they made it, the Jews made it pretty easy for them. Before that you have had some problems like one of the problems in Germany was the Night of the Long Knives. You know what that was? That is when they went on a rampage in Germany and they broke all the windows and burnt down all the things that the Jews owned. It was called Night of the Long Knives. But when they wanted to finally wipe out the Jews, the plan was pretty easy. Because the Jews owned whole city blocks. So what the Germans did is they boarded off all of the Jewish section. They called it a ghetto. Not the same word that we identify with a ghetto today. But it was called the Warsaw Ghetto. In other words, the Jews could come out and come in, but they had to go out through a gate and SS guards were all around the city, barricade, barbed wire. They basically were a prisoner in that ghetto.

Ever see \*Schindler's List\*? If you have not seen \*Schindler's List\* or your children have not seen \*Schindler's List\*, I suggest that you rent that movie and let them see it. Maybe not if they are real young. But if you want to get an understanding and appreciation of what was going on and what the Jews did and what God did to the Jews and what happened to the Jews for God to

get them to go back, \*Schindler's List\* is absolutely what you have to see. Without a doubt, absolutely what you have to see.

We talk about the Holocaust. We talk about everything that took place. You know, we live in a world today that denies the Holocaust. A number of years ago, I bought a state sale from a guy, his name was Colonel Roy. Colonel Roy, during World War II, was the common commander that liberated Dachau concentration camp. Not only did I get all of his stuff that he had, I think he stole everything in Dachau, but not only did I get a treasure trove of uniforms and stuff, I got a treasure trove of documents and photographs. I had the original radio script that he did with Bill Bradley, who was Voice of America, in 1945 from Dachau concentration camp describing the events when he entered that camp. Bill Bradley's part was underlined in red and his was underlined in blue as he spoke back. I got probably a stack of four or five hundred photographs of the atrocities at Dachau. Dachau was just one of a thousand more concentration camps. There was Treblinka. There was Sobibor. There was Auschwitz. There was Mauthausen. They were everywhere in Poland and in Germany, mostly in Poland, because Poland was isolated from everything and you could hide it better there. It was an incredible thing.

Then there was a document that came down from Allied Supreme Commander Dwight Eisenhower. In that document was an order telling him that he was to document everything, photograph everything he saw. That is why the stack of photographs, they were probably just the ones that were left over. I have got movie reels of some of the most unbelievable stuff you have ever seen in your life. You know, make you sick when you see it. You know why they documented all of that? You know why Eisenhower had the forethought to document all that? Because Eisenhower said when he saw and toured the camps, when he saw the atrocities that the Nazis had done to the nation of Israel, he said, "I want everything documented. I want everything photographed. I want everything laid out exactly the way that it is, because there will come a day when somebody will say, 'This never happened.'"

The prosecutor, the Nazi war criminals in Nuremberg, I forget his name now. After the Nuremberg trials, he lived for some 20, 30 years. After the Nuremberg trials, you know, people started to talk about the fact that the Holocaust never happened. You know what he said? He said, "I prosecuted every Nazi criminal. I prosecuted everybody from every concentration camp. I heard every excuse. I heard men say that they knew nothing about it. I heard men say that they were only following orders. I heard men say that they hated the Jews, like guys like Adolf Eichmann. I heard guys say that that was just following the orders and it was coming down a chain of command." And one time in all the prosecution defenses that I ever heard, it never happened. Oh, it happened.

You heard me say many, many times. World War I got the land ready for the Jew, and World War II got the Jew ready for the land. He would not go back after World War I. Business was good. He was making a killing in Europe, in all of the countries in Europe. Now let me tell you, when Adolf Hitler gassed between six and eight million of them, they were ready to go back. God's hand was moving down through the process of time. You want to talk about the Holocaust? You want to see the Jews prophesied being burned in the ovens in Auschwitz and Treblinka, Sobibor, Belsen, Bergen-Belsen, Mauthausen? You want to see it? Read Ezekiel 22:21, Ezekiel 23:25,

Jeremiah 16:16, Isaiah 9:9. God tells you right there that He is going to put them in the ovens and He is going to burn them like cordwood. "For a little moment I have forsaken thee." Brother, what a moment. What a moment.

At the end of World War II, there are somewhere between 9 and 12 million Jews living on planet Earth. That is not even a population in New York City. They are wiped down to a remnant. In 1948, you know what happens? On May the 14th, Israel becomes a nation and the fig tree puts forth its leaves. The prophecy is fulfilled. Matthew chapter 24 of the prophecy or the parable of the fig tree. On May the 14th, 1948, she runs up the Star of David and she becomes officially a nation. On the 15th, the next day she is attacked by the Arab League, seven nations. Just by a wild stroke, it is the same seven nations that attacked Joshua when he went into the land and possessed it back in the book of Joshua.

Ladies and gentlemen, as far as I am concerned, based on what I know about the Bible, based on the book of Esther, we talked about that a couple of Thursday nights ago. As far as I am concerned, based on my study of the Scriptures, as far as I am concerned, in God's mind, the time that the Gentiles ended in 1918. What you have seen from 1918 up to this point right now is the end of the Philadelphia Church Age, which really ended in 1900, and God, dethroning the Gentiles and getting ready to set up the Jews. God always does it through a transition.

The reason why I tell you that is this. I do not know how much you know about the Bible. If you know anything about the Bible, you know the great discrepancy between Genesis chapter 15, verse 13, and Exodus chapter 12, verse 40, and Galatians chapter 3, verse 17. One place says that the nation of Israel is down in Egypt 430 years. The other says this place is 400 years. The great Bible scholars who hate your Bible like to say, "See, see, see, there is a contradiction in your Bible. Somebody made a scribal error." They did not make a scribal error. One place says 400 is talking about the four generations. The other place is the 30 years added on going back to Abraham when God called him out. If that is true and that holds true and God counts that beginning of Israel, for when God called him out and Abraham is on the other end of Weasville on 1900, then the time that the Gentiles in God's mind was over in 1900, certainly by 1918.

You and I are living on borrowed time this morning, ladies and gentlemen. You and I, with all of our fun things that we like to do and all the things that we like to put in our lives that have nothing to do with God, bless your hearts. You are living in a situation that we are right at the end. At this point in May 14, 1948, the last prophecy is fulfilled. The barren fig tree has now budded. It has put forth its leaves, Matthew chapter 24, verse 32, and its tender branch is now very evident.

I do not know how to do this. There are a lot of things in the Bible I see, but I have not got the smarts to put them together. I am going to lay this out for you, but please do not run up to me and tell me you have got the answer because I know you do not. But that is one of the most amazing things I have ever seen in my life. I believe, I believe everything about this Bible. I believe this Bible is the Word of God, cover to cover, including the cover. I believe that everything in it is by God for me to have. I believe that everything that is in God's mind is in this book because I am too stupid to get it, does not mean it is not in here. I believe without a doubt the date of the

rapture and the time of the events and the Second Coming is right in this book. We just cannot see it. But boy, I see things in there that boy, I just get me tantalized, not that I want to figure it out. You know why God will not figure it out, will not give it to anybody, do you not?

Remember, I remember back in 1988, there was a book put out that said \*88 Reasons Why Christ Is Coming in 1988\*. All the Christians in the world thought He was coming in 1988. Mostly you do not even remember that, you are too young. When the pro-Christian world believed that everything was going to end in 1988, you know what they did? Now you would think that they went out and they would win people to Christ. You know what they did? They all went up and ran up their credit cards and got whatever they want because they thought when Christ came, they would not have to pay for it. That is the body of Christ. That is the body of Christ. So He says, "For such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." He will come when you do not think He is going to come. That is the way He is going to work it. That is the way He is going to work it.

My Bible says in Matthew chapter 24, verse 32, that when the fig tree put forth its leaves, that is 1948, the nation of Israel after 2,600 years becoming a nation. Then I go on in the book of Song of Solomon in chapter 2, and I find a picture of the rapture of the church. After the rapture of the church, the Bible throws in the fig tree has now put forth green figs. See, in 1948 it was just the leaves and the tender buds. So by the time the rapture of the church, those leaves have turned into green figs. Once Israel goes through the Tribulation Period and goes through all that and in the millennium, those figs will become fully ripe as you bear the fruit God wanted you to bear. That is a key. I guarantee you right now as we are standing here right now with everything I believe and everything I know and everything I hold sacred and holy, I am telling you right now, that fig tree has green figs on it. Somebody says, "Well, what do you think I ought to do in life?" Do not make any long-range plans. If I can give you a second bit of advice, do not get too far out from God, you cannot get back in a heartbeat.

Now go back to Matthew chapter 24. Look at this. Look at verse 32: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree." We know that is Israel. "When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves," that is 1948, the budding of the fig tree. "Ye know that summer is nigh." Now there is a great key for you. That great key is the four seasons. I am not talking about the musical singing group, I am talking about the ones in the Bible. The summer is nigh. The summer is nigh. Now look at this. "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things," what things? The budding of the fig tree. "Know that it is near, even at the doors."

I do not know what you have studied in the Bible. You want a good study in the Bible? Start with John chapter 10 and start the door where a porter stands and he opens that door and Christ comes down. Then he opens that door and Christ takes somebody up. Go to Revelation chapter 4. You have got the church age, chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3. In Revelation chapter 4, a door is open in heaven and somebody goes up. You never find the church again in the book of Revelation. You know why? That door is the rapture. That is why. "When you see these things, when you see these things, the budding of the fig tree. Know that it is near, even at the door." I am not looking for a sign. I am listening for a sound. It is at the door. It is at the door.

Let me ask you a question. You are home with your wife and your wife, you are in the room or in the kitchen and your wife is in the restroom or she is in the bathroom or in the, that is the restroom. She is in the bedroom or whatever doing something and she says, "Honey, there is somebody at the door." What do you do? I am sorry. It must be a really hard question. When there is somebody at the door. What do you do? You certainly move toward the door to see who is at the door. What are you and I ought to be doing? There is somebody at the door. Are we going toward the door or are we running away from the door? It is here, folks. It is here. I am just telling you.

Then he says this in verse 34, and here is the little problem we have. "Verily, verily." That is truly, truly in your Bible. "I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Now there are four generations in your Bible that we know of. The first generation is in Genesis chapter 15, verse 13, and that is a hundred years. The second generation is Psalm 90, and that is 70 years. Matthew chapter 1, verse 17 is the third generation, that is 47 years. Then we have a generation back in Genesis chapter 3 with Noah which runs 120 years. Now Israel has been a nation, that fig tree budded 61 years ago today. Not today, but I mean this year. So we are 61 years into this thing. You have got to keep in mind it does not say that that generation has to end. It says that that generation, you know what a generation is? I was born in 1950. That is my generation. What he is saying is that all the people who were born in 1950 when we are all dead, that is the end of that generation. I mean when the last person dies that was born in 1950, that will wipe out that generation. What he is saying is this, the generation that is alive, that sees the budding of the fig tree, that generation of 1948 will not die out till all these things be fulfilled. What he is talking about is the restoration of the nation of Israel, not the rapture, the restoration of the nation of Israel. The rapture has to happen before the restoration takes place.

Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 1, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you." The book of Revelation in Paul also, like the coming of the Lord to a woman in travail, a woman in labor, a woman is going to have a child. There is certainly any illustration in this church that I will be able to identify with that will be a woman having a child. You know ladies, have you ever had a child when you go into the doctor and the doctor says you are going to have a baby, you are pregnant, and he tries to figure out your due date. He tried to figure that out on the basis of the last time you missed your period and how that thing works out, but you know as well as I do, most women never get their due date. I mean for every, I bet there probably is a one out of a hundred on a national heaven day, and you did? Congratulations. Witchcraft always helps when you get into those things. Bottom line is most women do not do that. The truth of the matter is this, you know when that baby is coming, do you not? You get up there, boy, that morning, your whole body, and I am a firm believer of listen to your body. When your body, when I get up in the morning, I do not feel good. My body says go back to bed. I listen to my body. When I get up in the morning, my son says that to me a lot lately. I do not know what it is, you know? I get up in the morning and I have, you know, I am really run down. I have a bad cold and all this, and I know I want to go to the gym, and my body says, "You need to take a break off. You do not need to go put all that energy out. I am trying to fight something inside you. Do not go give it out on some machine someplace." I try to listen to my body. A woman who has had a good child, she knows. She gets up that morning and maybe she has had

contractions off and on, or a false start, and she knows this is not the time to go to Atlantic City. She knows. Do not get, the doctor will say, "You know what, no airplane trips, no bumpy rides, stay off the roller coaster, put all of the things that are on the other side, do not go, it is getting close." I am telling you, in 1948, the last prophecy was fulfilled. We are living in the greatest time in the history of the world. I guarantee you, if you do not get killed, some of you younger people in here, if you do not get killed in a car wreck or you do not die of some unnatural thing, you will probably never see an undertaker. You will probably never see an undertaker.

#### SEC: Historical Fulfillment of Prophecy

Allow me just a moment to show you the hand of God down through the Bible and down through history. One of the things that I think made the Bible bases class so successful, so many of you learning your Bible, was to understand a way that we correlated history and the Bible. That we took all the events that you have heard about all of your life and we put them in a logistical, understandable order that bottled them up to the events in history. It revolutionized so many of you. It gave you an appreciation for things that you, I have never seen a group of people grasp the concepts of the Bible as fast as many of you did. That is why I am excited to read your thesis papers.

I showed you God has had a plan, and in the Old Testament that plan revolves around the nation of Israel, does it not? When we study the Old Testament, oh I know there are lots of names, lots of places, and lots of things that happen, but you know what you basically have? You have God formulating a nation of people. By the time you get to Exodus chapter 12, you have God calling out that nation of people. By the time you get to David and Solomon in the Kings and Chronicles, you have God establishing that nation. By the time you get to the end of your Old Testament, you see that nation in a tailspin crash and burn right into the ground. That is all the Old Testament is. Do not get caught up with the names, places, and dates, or you better know them in your paper. Do not get hung up on that and get caught up in all the stuff that goes on. Understand that the Old Testament is about God formulating. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, everybody up to that point, God is putting the right people in the right place, doing the right thing, and the devil doing what he can do to stop them. Nothing stops God's plan. God formulates them. God calls them out. God establishes them. Then we watch them be a train wreck. We watch them implode.

What does God do? God in 606 B.C. puts them into the Gentile nations. We talked about those Gentile nations many times on Thursday night, and even on Sunday morning: Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome, and then in the modern times, England, Russia, and then the good old U.S. of A. We see those in the book of Daniel, so clearly how the progression, because it is called the times of the Gentile. But again, we see, we see Israel doing all the wrong things, going after the other gods, provoking God to jealousy. So God sends Sennacherib, king of Assyria, down to the north side, and Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to the southern tribes. He takes them into captivity for 70 years. What happens? Israel and Nehemiah, a small remnant goes back. You know why that remnant goes back? The number is given. There is something like 46,000 or 48,000. I forget the exact number. There must have been 3 million, 4 million, 5 million Jews. Just a small remnant goes back. You know why? Because God wanted to ensure. God's

hand is always outstretched to the nation of Israel. Even though He has forsaken them for a short moment, He wants to make sure that Jews are back in that homeland when the Messiah comes in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Oh, you have got to see it. You have got to see it.

If you want one of the greatest chapters, and I think it runs 72 or 74 verses, the greatest chapter on the end and the demise of the nation of Israel is Psalm 78. The end of the kingdom of heaven. Now the Gentile nations rule the world. Now the Jew has no homeland. Oh, a small remnant goes back in Ezra and Nehemiah, but they have no power. They are under the domination of Persia. Cyrus tells them what they can do. They try to rebuild the temple. They try to do all of the things. Did you ever notice back there in that passage when they had the second dedication of the temple under Ezra and Nehemiah that the old men wept? The old guys had been around and knew the Bible and knew about Solomon, how they wept and cried. Why would you weep and cry at the dedication of this temple? I will tell you why. Because it was an epitome of a disaster. When Solomon dedicated the temple, there was 100,000 sacrifices of oxen and cattle and sheep. 200,000 of this, 300,000 of that, 400,000 of this. The whole nation sacrificed to God, and there was over a million sacrifices given to God. In Ezra and Nehemiah, it is two chickens and a duck. Those old men knew the glory of Israel was gone. They wept because of what they once saw and now what they had. Oh, they are back in the land. They are not a free people.

You know Ezra and Nehemiah, you know Ahasuerus and all the things that go along with Zerubbabel and all those guys that try to provoke them and get them kicked out. Once Persia goes off, Greece comes on. Once Greece comes on, Rome comes on. Once Rome comes on, that brings us up to the First Coming of Christ. I do not know if you saw it or not. Maybe you have seen it before. Last Saturday night was one of my favorite movies, Ben Hur. How many saw it? How many have seen it in the past? How many do not give a flip about seeing it? Good. Now I know it is just a movie made by Hollywood, and I know that I think the thing I like about it, there is no, back then when you made a movie like that, they had to have 30,000 extras. Today you are just computer generated. To me there is just something about computer generated that is not real. Maybe it is the fact that it is not real. I do not know. But I mean you see things like \*The Ten Commandments\* and you see things like \*Ben Hur\* and you see all those thousands and hundreds of thousands of people. I mean incredible. Do you not notice that? It is built around the time of Christ. It is built around the fact that here is Judah Ben Hur. It is built around the fact that it is built on Michelangelo's painting of God reaching out to man. If you saw at the beginning the finger of God touching a finger of man. That is Michelangelo's painting in the Sistine Chapel up there. The modern version of it was E.T. and they replaced God with an alien and they had his alien finger touching the man of God. That will be the last act of the play. We do not have time to get into that this morning but boy is it a good one.

It is all built around Rome. Rome is in power. The Jews are in the land but they have nothing, they are controlled over. But Romans tell them what to do. When Christianity became a threat the iron heel of Rome came down on them. They had nothing they could do. For 2,600 years they were a nation without a country. They were a group of people that had nothing. But at the time you get past Titus destroying them in 70 A.D., the Turks take over. They are kicked out of Jerusalem. Now the Muslims have it. It is an absolute disaster. It is an absolute terrible disaster.

The Jews now are completely kicked out of the land. From 100 A.D. to 1900 A.D. they had no country. They had no land. The fig tree was barren, ladies and gentlemen. No country. No land. They were the vagabonds of this planet. They were persecuted by every religion. Every country. Spain had died on them. England banished them. France butchered them. Germany got rid of them long before Adolf Hitler showed up. 2,600 years. 2,600 years. 1,800 years from Christ.

Then, lo and behold, in the 1880s, right around 1900, a guy by the name of Theodore Herzl started a movement called the Zionist movement. When he started that Zionist movement, people around the world began to recognize the plight of the Jews. You know what? I know that God of the Bible is the God of history, and I know that history always repeats itself. That is why I know that this country is headed for an absolute disaster because they will not learn the lessons of history. We are in a war in Afghanistan, and I do not care if you send 40,000 troops. I do not care if you send 140,000 troops. I do not care if you send 40 million troops. You will never win in Afghanistan. You know what the name of Afghanistan is down through history? The graveyard of the empires. There has never been a nation on the face of this planet that defeated the Afghans. The British could not do it. Russia could not do it. And we will not do it. We do not learn those lessons. We make the same mistakes over and over and over again.

Yet in 1900, I see Theodore Herzl start the Zionist movement. 1900 A.D. Theodore Herzl is called the father of modern Israel. It is just by a wild stroke of coincidence in 1900 B.C., Abraham, who was the father of the nation of Israel, began to bring back the nation of Israel to the land God wanted him to have. In 1900 B.C., Theodore Herzl did it in 1900 A.D. God was on the move. God was on the move. God is going to do something. We are right in the middle of it. God's hand in gathering the nation of Israel from all the countries and all the nations that it had been scattered to was beginning to be fulfilled. In Isaiah 54, Jeremiah 23, Jeremiah 31, Jeremiah 32, all those passages we read, we see where God scattered them, but He brings them back.

On top of that, another great world event happened. In 1917, Lord Allenby, the Turks, the Muslims, the last of the Ottoman Empire, and of course you know about the Ottoman Empire, they come into power after the end of the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine Empire ran to about 1100, and the Ottoman Turks took over, and the Ottoman Empire ran all the way up to 1917. The Ottoman Turks got whipped, they took the wrong side in World War I, they went with Germany, and that pretty much broke their back. But in 1917, Lord Allenby of the British Army, England is the world power now. England has got everything she has got and every territory she has because England stood on a King James 1611 Authorized Version. Now it is about to change, but right now we are still in the green, about to go into black and then into the red.

The bottom line is this, Lord Allenby goes in and kicks the Turks out. Now England, the most powerful nation on the face of this planet, owns Jerusalem. It was at that time, talk about the hand of God, during World War I that a guy by the name of Chaim Weizmann, who was a Jew, developed some kind of smokeless gunpowder, believe it or not, from horse chestnuts. It helped the British win World War I. In 1917, in British Parliament, one of the great lords of that point by the name of Lord Balfour, a saved man, stood up in Parliament and put forth a declaration called the Balfour Declaration. The Balfour Declaration was a declaration put out by Lord Balfour to the British Commons and the British Parliament that now that they had Jerusalem because of

what Weizmann had done to help them, and he read out of a King James 1611 Authorized Version that that land belonged rightly to the Jew and that land should be given back to the nation of Israel. They passed that, it went into the Parliament, it passed the Parliament, and the Balfour Declaration came into being. But the Jews were not ready. Through all the political wrangling that went on, God stalled that off because God's timing was not ready for that. The Jew was not ready for that.

You see, the Jew had settled in Europe through the 1800s. There is one thing about a Jew, he has got this survival mode in him. He will survive when others starve to death. He will make money when you and I are in the depression line. After World War I, I do not know if you know how bad the economic depression got into Europe, particularly in Germany. In the 1920s, it took a hundred million Reichsmarks to buy one loaf of bread. It was an incredible thing. But the Jew had the money to buy up whole city blocks in Europe. Well, when they went to the concentration camps in 1940, you know what one of the biggest enterprising things they did? They extracted the gold fillings out of the Jews' teeth after they killed them. Sometimes before they killed them. I have got pictures of bushel baskets full of gold teeth. Here is the Jew living in Europe in the 20s. Whole Europe is in a depression. A hundred million Reichsmarks to buy a loaf of bread. They have money to put gold in their teeth.

Ever hear of the Warsaw Ghetto? Warsaw Ghetto is only the most famous one. You know what the Warsaw Ghetto was, Warsaw being in Poland? When the Germans wanted to do the final solution and wipe out the nation of Israel, they made it, the Jews made it pretty easy for them. Before that you have had some problems like one of the problems in Germany was the Night of the Long Knives. You know what that was? That is when they went on a rampage in Germany and they broke all the windows and burnt down all the things that the Jews owned. It was called Night of the Long Knives. But when they wanted to finally wipe out the Jews, the plan was pretty easy. Because the Jews owned whole city blocks. So what the Germans did is they boarded off all of the Jewish section. They called it a ghetto. Not the same word that we identify with a ghetto today. But it was called the Warsaw Ghetto. In other words, the Jews could come out and come in, but they had to go out through a gate and SS guards were all around the city, barricade, barbed wire. They basically were a prisoner in that ghetto.

Ever see \*Schindler's List\*? If you have not seen \*Schindler's List\* or your children have not seen \*Schindler's List\*, I suggest that you rent that movie and let them see it. Maybe not if they are real young. But if you want to get an understanding and appreciation of what was going on and what the Jews did and what God did to the Jews and what happened to the Jews for God to get them to go back, \*Schindler's List\* is absolutely what you have to see. Without a doubt, absolutely what you have to see.

We talk about the Holocaust. We talk about everything that took place. You know, we live in a world today that denies the Holocaust. A number of years ago, I bought a state sale from a guy, his name was Colonel Roy. Colonel Roy, during World War II, was the common commander that liberated Dachau concentration camp. Not only did I get all of his stuff that he had, I think he stole everything in Dachau, but not only did I get a treasure trove of uniforms and stuff, I got a treasure trove of documents and photographs. I had the original radio script that he did with Bill

Bradley, who was Voice of America, in 1945 from Dachau concentration camp describing the events when he entered that camp. Bill Bradley's part was underlined in red and his was underlined in blue as he spoke back. I got probably a stack of four or five hundred photographs of the atrocities at Dachau. Dachau was just one of a thousand more concentration camps. There was Treblinka. There was Sobibor. There was Auschwitz. There was Mauthausen. They were everywhere in Poland and in Germany, mostly in Poland, because Poland was isolated from everything and you could hide it better there. It was an incredible thing.

Then there was a document that came down from Allied Supreme Commander Dwight Eisenhower. In that document was an order telling him that he was to document everything, photograph everything he saw. That is why the stack of photographs, they were probably just the ones that were left over. I have got movie reels of some of the most unbelievable stuff you have ever seen in your life. You know, make you sick when you see it. You know why they documented all of that? You know why Eisenhower had the forethought to document all that? Because Eisenhower said when he saw and toured the camps, when he saw the atrocities that the Nazis had done to the nation of Israel, he said, "I want everything documented. I want everything photographed. I want everything laid out exactly the way that it is, because there will come a day when somebody will say, 'This never happened.'"

The prosecutor, the Nazi war criminals in Nuremberg, I forget his name now. After the Nuremberg trials, he lived for some 20, 30 years. After the Nuremberg trials, you know, people started to talk about the fact that the Holocaust never happened. You know what he said? He said, "I prosecuted every Nazi criminal. I prosecuted everybody from every concentration camp. I heard every excuse. I heard men say that they knew nothing about it. I heard men say that they were only following orders. I heard men say that they hated the Jews, like guys like Adolf Eichmann. I heard guys say that that was just following the orders and it was coming down a chain of command." And one time in all the prosecution defenses that I ever heard, it never happened. Oh, it happened.

You heard me say many, many times. World War I got the land ready for the Jew, and World War II got the Jew ready for the land. He would not go back after World War I. Business was good. He was making a killing in Europe, in all of the countries in Europe. Now let me tell you, when Adolf Hitler gassed between six and eight million of them, they were ready to go back. God's hand was moving down through the process of time. You want to talk about the Holocaust? You want to see the Jews prophesied being burned in the ovens in Auschwitz and Treblinka, Sobibor, Belsen, Bergen-Belsen, Mauthausen? You want to see it? Read Ezekiel 22:21, Ezekiel 23:25, Jeremiah 16:16, Isaiah 9:9. God tells you right there that He is going to put them in the ovens and He is going to burn them like cordwood. "For a little moment I have forsaken thee." Brother, what a moment. What a moment.

At the end of World War II, there are somewhere between 9 and 12 million Jews living on planet Earth. That is not even a population in New York City. They are wiped down to a remnant. In 1948, you know what happens? On May the 14th, Israel becomes a nation and the fig tree puts forth its leaves. The prophecy is fulfilled. Matthew chapter 24 of the prophecy or the parable of the fig tree. On May the 14th, 1948, she runs up the Star of David and she becomes officially a

nation. On the 15th, the next day she is attacked by the Arab League, seven nations. Just by a wild stroke, it is the same seven nations that attacked Joshua when he went into the land and possessed it back in the book of Joshua.

Ladies and gentlemen, as far as I am concerned, based on what I know about the Bible, based on the book of Esther, we talked about that a couple of Thursday nights ago. As far as I am concerned, based on my study of the Scriptures, as far as I am concerned, in God's mind, the time that the Gentiles ended in 1918. What you have seen from 1918 up to this point right now is the end of the Philadelphia Church Age, which really ended in 1900, and God, dethroning the Gentiles and getting ready to set up the Jews. God always does it through a transition.

The reason why I tell you that is this. I do not know how much you know about the Bible. If you know anything about the Bible, you know the great discrepancy between Genesis chapter 15, verse 13, and Exodus chapter 12, verse 40, and Galatians chapter 3, verse 17. One place says that the nation of Israel is down in Egypt 430 years. The other says this place is 400 years. The great Bible scholars who hate your Bible like to say, "See, see, see, there is a contradiction in your Bible. Somebody made a scribal error." They did not make a scribal error. One place says 400 is talking about the four generations. The other place is the 30 years added on going back to Abraham when God called him out. If that is true and that holds true and God counts that beginning of Israel, for when God called him out and Abraham is on the other end of Weasville on 1900, then the time that the Gentiles in God's mind was over in 1900, certainly by 1918.

You and I are living on borrowed time this morning, ladies and gentlemen. You and I, with all of our fun things that we like to do and all the things that we like to put in our lives that have nothing to do with God, bless your hearts. You are living in a situation that we are right at the end. At this point in May 14, 1948, the last prophecy is fulfilled. The barren fig tree has now budded. It has put forth its leaves, Matthew chapter 24, verse 32, and its tender branch is now very evident.

I do not know how to do this. There are a lot of things in the Bible I see, but I have not got the smarts to put them together. I am going to lay this out for you, but please do not run up to me and tell me you have got the answer because I know you do not. But that is one of the most amazing things I have ever seen in my life. I believe, I believe everything about this Bible. I believe this Bible is the Word of God, cover to cover, including the cover. I believe that everything in it is by God for me to have. I believe that everything that is in God's mind is in this book because I am too stupid to get it, does not mean it is not in here. I believe without a doubt the date of the rapture and the time of the events and the Second Coming is right in this book. We just cannot see it. But boy, I see things in there that boy, I just get me tantalized, not that I want to figure it out. You know why God will not figure it out, will not give it to anybody, do you not?

Remember, I remember back in 1988, there was a book put out that said \*88 Reasons Why Christ Is Coming in 1988\*. All the Christians in the world thought He was coming in 1988. Mostly you do not even remember that, you are too young. When the pro-Christian world believed that everything was going to end in 1988, you know what they did? Now you would think that they went out and they would win people to Christ. You know what they did? They all

went up and ran up their credit cards and got whatever they want because they thought when Christ came, they would not have to pay for it. That is the body of Christ. That is the body of Christ. So He says, "For such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." He will come when you do not think He is going to come. That is the way He is going to work it. That is the way He is going to work it.

My Bible says in Matthew chapter 24, verse 32, that when the fig tree put forth its leaves, that is 1948, the nation of Israel after 2,600 years becoming a nation. Then I go on in the book of Song of Solomon in chapter 2, and I find a picture of the rapture of the church. After the rapture of the church, the Bible throws in the fig tree has now put forth green figs. See, in 1948 it was just the leaves and the tender buds. So by the time the rapture of the church, those leaves have turned into green figs. Once Israel goes through the Tribulation Period and goes through all that and in the millennium, those figs will become fully ripe as you bear the fruit God wanted you to bear. That is a key. I guarantee you right now as we are standing here right now with everything I believe and everything I know and everything I hold sacred and holy, I am telling you right now, that fig tree has green figs on it. Somebody says, "Well, what do you think I ought to do in life?" Do not make any long-range plans. If I can give you a second bit of advice, do not get too far out from God, you cannot get back in a heartbeat.

Now go back to Matthew chapter 24. Look at this. Look at verse 32: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree." We know that is Israel. "When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves," that is 1948, the budding of the fig tree. "Ye know that summer is nigh." Now there is a great key for you. That great key is the four seasons. I am not talking about the musical singing group, I am talking about the ones in the Bible. The summer is nigh. The summer is nigh. Now look at this. "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things," what things? The budding of the fig tree. "Know that it is near, even at the doors."

I do not know what you have studied in the Bible. You want a good study in the Bible? Start with John chapter 10 and start the door where a porter stands and he opens that door and Christ comes down. Then he opens that door and Christ takes somebody up. Go to Revelation chapter 4. You have got the church age, chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3. In Revelation chapter 4, a door is open in heaven and somebody goes up. You never find the church again in the book of Revelation. You know why? That door is the rapture. That is why. "When you see these things, when you see these things, the budding of the fig tree. Know that it is near, even at the door." I am not looking for a sign. I am listening for a sound. It is at the door. It is at the door.

Let me ask you a question. You are home with your wife and your wife, you are in the room or in the kitchen and your wife is in the restroom or she is in the bathroom or in the, that is the restroom. She is in the bedroom or whatever doing something and she says, "Honey, there is somebody at the door." What do you do? I am sorry. It must be a really hard question. When there is somebody at the door. What do you do? You certainly move toward the door to see who is at the door. What are you and I ought to be doing? There is somebody at the door. Are we going toward the door or are we running away from the door? It is here, folks. It is here. I am just telling you.

Then he says this in verse 34, and here is the little problem we have. "Verily, verily." That is truly, truly in your Bible. "I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Now there are four generations in your Bible that we know of. The first generation is in Genesis chapter 15, verse 13, and that is a hundred years. The second generation is Psalm 90, and that is 70 years. Matthew chapter 1, verse 17 is the third generation, that is 47 years. Then we have a generation back in Genesis chapter 3 with Noah which runs 120 years. Now Israel has been a nation, that fig tree budded 61 years ago today. Not today, but I mean this year. So we are 61 years into this thing. You have got to keep in mind it does not say that that generation has to end. It says that that generation, you know what a generation is? I was born in 1950. That is my generation. What he is saying is that all the people who were born in 1950 when we are all dead, that is the end of that generation. I mean when the last person dies that was born in 1950, that will wipe out that generation. What he is saying is this, the generation that is alive, that sees the budding of the fig tree, that generation of 1948 will not die out till all these things be fulfilled. What he is talking about is the restoration of the nation of Israel, not the rapture, the restoration of the nation of Israel. The rapture has to happen before the restoration takes place.

Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 1, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you." The book of Revelation in Paul also, like the coming of the Lord to a woman in travail, a woman in labor, a woman is going to have a child. There is certainly any illustration in this church that I will be able to identify with that will be a woman having a child. You know ladies, have you ever had a child when you go into the doctor and the doctor says you are going to have a baby, you are pregnant, and he tries to figure out your due date. He tried to figure that out on the basis of the last time you missed your period and how that thing works out, but you know as well as I do, most women never get their due date. I mean for every, I bet there probably is a one out of a hundred on a national heaven day, and you did? Congratulations. Witchcraft always helps when you get into those things. Bottom line is most women do not do that. The truth of the matter is this, you know when that baby is coming, do you not? You get up there, boy, that morning, your whole body, and I am a firm believer of listen to your body. When your body, when I get up in the morning, I do not feel good. My body says go back to bed. I listen to my body. When I get up in the morning, my son says that to me a lot lately. I do not know what it is, you know? I get up in the morning and I have, you know, I am really run down. I have a bad cold and all this, and I know I want to go to the gym, and my body says, "You need to take a break off. You do not need to go put all that energy out. I am trying to fight something inside you. Do not go give it out on some machine someplace." I try to listen to my body. A woman who has had a good child, she knows. She gets up that morning and maybe she has had contractions off and on, or a false start, and she knows this is not the time to go to Atlantic City. She knows. Do not get, the doctor will say, "You know what, no airplane trips, no bumpy rides, stay off the roller coaster, put all of the things that are on the other side, do not go, it is getting close." I am telling you, in 1948, the last prophecy was fulfilled. We are living in the greatest time in the history of the world. I guarantee you, if you do not get killed, some of you younger people in here, if you do not get killed in a car wreck or you do not die of some unnatural thing, you will probably never see an undertaker. You will probably never see an undertaker.

SEC: Living in the End Times

The greatest chapter in the New Testament on God restoring the nation of Israel is Romans chapter 11. We are living in a time that God is preparing the final elements. We are coming down with the curtain coming down on Act 6 and Act 7 is going to raise up. Act 7 is the Tribulation Period, the Second Coming of Christ, and the Millennium. When we get into Romans chapter 11, God wanted us as the church to understand God is not finished with the nation of Israel. God is going to restore the nation of Israel. You and I need to understand that we are part of that restoration process. That is why things are the way they are in Christianity. Christianity is the most goofiest thing in the world today. God's people are the goofiest people in the world today. The devil is doing everything he can in people's lives to have them miss what God is going to do. Most of God's people are. They are oblivious to it. They have got so many other things in their life. They are missing this greatest event that God has put us here for.

My advice from a message that I must have heard back in the 1980s, some 29 years ago, for you and for me today, is there is something that we should see. That is God's perspective historically of Israel. There is something that we should know. That is God is going to restore them. There is something we should watch. The fig tree has budded. Something that is going on in Iran right now in Afghanistan with the nuclear bomb that they are going to get and Israel is not going to put up with it. I do not know if you heard the prime minister of Israel in his United Nations address when he stood up and he said, basically, "We will take you out," and it is coming. You have seen that most of the U.N. would not even stay there and listen to him because the whole world is against the nation of Israel. My advice to you, ladies and gentlemen, keep short accounts with God and do not stray too far from home.

I want to end with this illustration. I want you to listen to me. Do not put your Bible away. Do not put your pens away. Stay in freeze mode. When you get \*Schindler's List\*, maybe you saw it after I tell you this story. Go see it again. Rent it. Oskar Schindler was a real man. Oskar Schindler was a German businessman who started out making a lot of money using the Jews as slave labor. But through the process of time, he saw the atrocities and he learned to love the Jewish people and he turned from making money to losing everything he had to save a bunch of Jews, which to this day are called the Schindler Jews. There are not many of them left today. Oskar Schindler died a number of years ago and he is buried over in Israel and Jerusalem. Oskar Schindler wound up spending every dime he had trying to save the Jews that he had from the concentration camps. He got a hold and he was not a saved man now by any stretch of the imagination. I am not saying he was a saved man. He was somebody who I am sure like in the Tribulation Period, people who are Gentiles that will help the Jew. He saw what was happening and he had the wherewithal and I believe God used him, but he was not a Christian by any stretch of the imagination. Probably lost and in hell today.

At the end of the movie, I think, and I remember watching that movie, the movie was moving to me to see in the concentration camps, especially you have children, little eight or nine year old boys, when they started to put them on the, and you know, the children and the old folks, they went to the gas chamber. The ones that could work, they worked you to death. I sat there and I have two little granddaughters and back then my own daughters were not that old and I remember in that one scene when they were lining them up in Auschwitz and those little guys,

the moms were trying to hide their children and those two little guys ran down and hid. When you look down, the one little kid is slid down into a toilet, covered up to his mouth with all the excrement of the human in that thing and those terrified little eyes looking up, somebody might find him. I thought to myself, those things moved me, but I think the most moving thing of that whole movie was at the end of the movie when the war was over and Oskar Schindler realized not only had he saved the Jews, but it hits him like a ton of bricks that he should have done more. He takes off the ring on his finger, which was worth a lot of money and he says, "I could have bought 10 more Jews with this." He took off the watch of his arm and he said, "I could have bought 30 more with this." He took off his German golden party badge, the German golden Nazi party, and he said, "I could have bought five with this." He looked around at every possession that he had spent money on and he said, "I could have sold that and saved more Jews."

Now all the Jews were so thankful for what he did and they told, "No, you did so much," and they even wrote a letter that as he passed through the Americans that he would have a validation that he helped the Jews, that he was not a privateer, but I saw that going around. It is so moving. He walks around speaking to himself, looking at a ring and he says, "I could have bought more Jews with this," and he took off his watch and he said, "I could have bought 30 more with this," and he walked around in the reality the war is over. Now there is a, there is a, the reality is shedding in and he now realizing that he could have done more even with all that he did.

I thought to myself, if there is any picture, ladies and gentlemen, of where you and I will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ with all that we have and the reality that instead of doing this, what you could have done with this for God. How many souls would this have paid for to hear the Gospel? How many things would this have done to further what God wanted to do? You see, we live in a world and we are all human. We live in a world that we get so caught up in it. You know, it is like working in a flour factory when you go home at night, you know what you have all over you? Flour. Now when you live in this world and you are up to your shoulders with it every day with the people who are lost and the people who do not care about the things of God, you tend to get that same kind of feeling and we lose sight of what God is doing.

We are right there at the door. There are no more prophecies to be fulfilled. God is turning His attention to the restoration of the nation of Israel, and we are living in the very time. We are 61 years past the last prophecy. We are not two years, three years. We are 61 years. It does not have to go to the end of the generation. It is within that generation. It just says that that generation will not end any way you slice it with what is going on in the Middle East and all around us and in our own world. We have to understand where we are at in relationship to the coming of the Lord. I believe it is the key to any ministry today and any church and any Christian's life today. We do not have time to have attitude problems. We do not have time to have things in our lives that keep us from where God wants us to be. I am not sure you ever had time when God's hand of chastisement, but certainly in the day and age that we are living in, if there is ever a time to keep your count short with God, it is today because we are right there.

We as a church and you as individuals, in your own personal relationship with God, you cannot afford to wind up with the Judgment Seat of Christ like Oskar Schindler did at the end of World War II, lamenting over the things that you spent all your time on when you could have spent that

time for what God wanted you to do. But we never understood the reality of where we are at in relationship to the coming of Christ. I will have a lot of things to give an account for at the Judgment Seat of Christ. I know I am far from perfect and I make my share of mistakes and I do as many dumb things as anybody else on this planet does, maybe more so. I know that there will be a lot of that. I do not expect anything of the Judgment Seat of Christ. I do not, I know, you know, I know how that thing works and I know where that whole thing flows, and I am going to tell you something. There will be a lot of things I am going to have to give an account for. I will tell you one thing, I will never stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ and have to give an account for it. That is not ever standing up here and telling you where you were at in relationship to where that book is and His coming and what our responsibility was. I have a lot on my hand, but that will not be one of them because I am telling you, folks, it is near, even at the door, even at the door.

Every head bowed and every eye closed. Now, Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus today. Lord, we love You and we thank You, Father, for the Book of Romans. We thank You, Father, for everything that You have given us as a church and thank You for these fine people that come out today to hear the Word of God being preached. Lord, I know that we live in times where God's people do not want to hear the truth today. We are living in a time where God's people, they live in a fantasy world. They think that, Lord, that it is all about them and what they want to do and all the good times they have. Lord, that is just the way the world is, the Christian world is today. Well, Lord, help these people today. These are good people, Lord. They are not a bad one in the bunch. But Lord, we all get so sidetracked with the things of this old world. We all get sidetracked. We all get the flour of this world all over us. We need a good shower and a good washing to get our perspective back. Lord, as we enter into Chapter 11, this was just the introduction to the greatest chapter that deals with probably the greatest theme in the Bible, and that is God restoring the nation of Israel and setting Himself up in the Millennial Reign of Christ, the Second Coming. Help us to understand that we are there. There is no time for bitter inner fighting among us. There is no time for bad attitudes. There is no time for this or for that. We are in a time of the last moments or the last seconds. If God's hourglass could be in this church this morning that we could see the sands of the grains of sand falling through that hourglass, Lord, it would be just the last few grains of sand before You come back. Help us, Father. Help us to stay focused. Help us to do what You have called us to do and help us to be with You in our relationship, all that God wants us to be. Help us to have those qualities that You have in our lives, and we will thank You.