

The Soon Coming End – Part 11

2 Peter 3:9-13

Daniel 8 and 11

Revelation 17 and 18

Although I have said these words to us on several occasions since first beginning this study about the “Soon Coming End of days”, I want to keep reminding us that all of the events that we are studying about here, especially in this Book of Revelations, are all a part of a carefully devised and orchestrated plan that God put into place long before the earth and men and angels were ever created.

Many well-intended sermons have been preached that describe mankind’s earthly adventure as some kind of failed experiment in which God finally decided to go ahead and “cut His losses” and call everything to a close.

But that is just not at all true! God is ever and always absolutely sovereign. His will and all of His plans are, in every way by intentional design. All we have to do is read these words here in front of us in this Book of Revelation to clearly see that to be so. The words are clear and plain. This is God’s hand at work at every turn, Him directing men and angels as they carry forward His plan for this final episode of life on the earth.

Why is it so important for us to keep rehearsing this biblical truth to ourselves? It is because as we observe the events of these present “days of trouble”, and as we slowly move towards the chaos and confusion of the tribulation, we can know with confidence and assurance that God really does have all these matters well in hand, that as misery and turmoil turn to unimaginable suffering, our God really is faithful and He is trustworthy to any and all who will turn and put their faith in Him.

And yes, on the day of the rapture we who have Christ as our Savior will be taken away to be with Christ and not have to suffer the worst of the tribulation. But that does not mean that we will not have to suffer at all. To the contrary, as we can see from all that is now taking place in the Middle-East countries, suffering will surely come to us, how much, we don’t know, but it is spreading towards us here in America a little each day. And we must be prepared and know what is really taking place, else we will be confused and not know how to respond.

Thankfully, right here in these scriptures, God has given us everything we will need for our preparation. We need only to have eyes to see and ears to listen.

Turn with me to the Book of Daniel and listen carefully to words that are given with exacting accuracy concerning how all these “end-of-days” prophecies will actually unfold. First, in Daniel chapter 12 . . . and note that these words clearly speak about the “rapture” that we look forward too. Listen, verse 1 of Daniel chapter 12,

1 “At that time (speaking here of the end of days) shall arise Michael (the archangel), the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book (the Lamb’s Book of Life). 2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. 4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” (Daniel 12:1-4 (ESV))

The Prophet Daniel was a man of dreams and visions. And through those dreams and visions God gave Daniel prophecies about things that would take place, some of those things would take place during his own day, but then also, he was given prophecies about things to take place in the very distant future, some things, like those spoken about here that are even yet to take place during the very last days of this earth.

And Daniel’s visions very often involved God’s mightiest of angels, in the words that I just read, Michael the Archangel, and then at other times, the messenger-angel Gabriel. And that was so here in these next words from chapter 9. Turn there to Daniel chapter 9 and listen as Daniel speaks!

20 Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, 21 while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. 22 He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. 23 "At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so, give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision. 24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. 25 "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven

weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26 "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. 27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." (Daniel 9:20-27 (NASB))

The time periods described here in this prophecy as "weeks" is interpreted by most bible scholars to mean "weeks of years". The sixty-two weeks and the seven weeks, a total of 69 weeks were the interim years between the days of Daniel's exile in Babylon, and the time of Jesus' death on the cross, a total of almost 490 years. And according to the calculations by those bible scholars, the timing is absolutely exact.

However, it is understood that the 70th week of God's prophecy was put into abeyance by God, that immediately following Christ's death on the cross, the 70th week of this prophecy, a final period of 7 years, was suspended in time, to be restarted at the end of days as the rapture takes place and as the seven years of the "Great Tribulation" begin.

In that 70th week, after we believers have been raptured away, the "antichrist" will begin his rise to dominance and power and he will dominate for the next seven years. And recall that we have said that in his first years of power, the first half of the tribulation, the antichrist will be very accommodating and helpful, providing protection and food and other necessities of life, making friends and influencing people all over the world, and especially Israel, but then after 3 ½ years, he will suddenly change. We read about that in Daniel chapter 9. Listen to the words of verse 27!

27 Then he (the antichrist) shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."
(Daniel 9:27 (NKJV))

Let me say this again. The person that these words are prophesying about is the "antichrist" who will rise to power, a charismatic leader who will win the favor of many throughout the world.

And along with the antichrist, two other strong demons will rise to power, the two beasts that are spoken about in Revelation chapter 13. And together, the three powerful

demons will represent themselves as being much like God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Recall again the words that I just read from Daniel 9. The antichrist is so very crafty in carrying out his demonic plans. Up through the first 3 ½ years of the 70th week, the antichrist will have been very helpful to most of the people of the world, and especially to Israel, even to the point of supporting Israel's rebuilding of the "Temple" and reinstating the Old Testament system of "sacrifices".

But all the while of working closely with Israel, in Revelation chapter 17 we read where the antichrist and the other two powerful demon "beasts" will also be forming their own "one-world religion" called there in chapter 17, the "harlot". And at first, that "one world religion" will work together with all the other religions, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and the others, but then the antichrist will quickly reduce religion down to just one religion, their own.

And it is believed that they will headquarter their new "one-world religion" right there in the temple in Jerusalem, bringing about the prophecy in Daniel 8,

9 Out of one of them came a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land (that's Israel). 10 It grew great, even to the host of heaven. And some of the host and some of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them. 11 It became great, even as great as the Prince of the host. And the regular burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown. (Daniel 8:9-11 (ESV))

In these words, we can see the rise to power of the antichrist that is taking place both in the unseen demonic kingdom, and in our visible human world. There in the hidden recesses of the demonic world, demons battle other demons for the right to rule, especially possessing the souls of religious leaders. And here we see satan casting down the other demon leaders and trampling them as he consolidates his power and position down to just the three in the "unholy trinity".

And then in Daniel 11, we see how those battles for power are going on in the invisible world look in our natural world. In verse 31 we read

31 "Forces from him (the antichrist) will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, (the newly rebuilt temple there in Jerusalem) and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation. (Daniel 11:31 (NASB))

These words “abomination of desolation” are key words. As the antichrist assumes greater and greater power in this “harlot religion”, the other demonic beasts, the “unholy trinity”, will begin to declare the antichrist to be “God”, and demand that all people everywhere, worship the antichrist as God or be killed, finally fulfilling satan’s evil desire that started all the way back when he first rebelled against God, that he would be “like God”.

And also, during this same time of rising to religious power, the antichrist will be spreading his power and his control to dominate and rule over every other area of life on the earth, controlling even the world financial markets. In chapter 18 of Revelations, we read about him setting up his financial control offices in “Babylon”. Whether this new Babylon is in the same location as the old Babylon, there in modern day Iraq, it’s not known, but many bible commentators think that it will be there. And there from Babylon, the antichrist will be able to control all of the financial markets of the world, fully instituting his “mark of the beast, 666”. Financial transactions, whether they be to buy groceries at a local market, or they be to buy or to sell huge blocks of stocks and bonds on the New York Stock Exchange, the “666” will always be required. And from the words of Revelation chapter 18, we know that the business transactions will constantly be filled with corruption. But what else would we expect from demons.

Thankfully, God will not permit the activities of the antichrist to continue without consequences, eventually his financial world will collapse. What will cause that financial collapse? It will be brought about by all of the death and destruction that will be coming upon the earth from all of the many “bowls of wrath” that God will be pouring out upon the earth, plagues, floods, earthquakes, wars, civil disobedience, and on and on. Commerce cannot be conducted successfully with all of those kinds of destruction and disarray taking place.

And with this financial collapse, the cries of the people of the world will be as we read there in Revelation chapter 18. Verse 1,

1 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 3 For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." (Revelation 18:1-3 (NKJV))

And in verse 9,

9 "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.' 11 And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore, (Revelation 18:9-11(NKJV)

And in verse 15

15 The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! 17 For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance 18 and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?' 19 They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.' 20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!" 21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. 22 The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. 23 The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth." (Revelation 18:15-24 (NKJV)

Again, the question . . . what has taken place to bring about the downfall of the world economy, the fall of Babylon and its economic system of the antichrist? The answer . . . it has been by God's hand bringing unspeakable wrath upon the world and upon the works of the antichrist. And next week, the Lord willing, we will begin reading about that in chapter 8 of Revelation; and about all the many things that God will begin to do to bring about the final end to all the plans and purposes of the antichrist and his demons.

But for today, may we close in prayer.