

**Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, June 4, 2017**

***"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." (Revelation 9:20-21)***

There's no sing-songy, poetic way to frame what I have been indicting in my heart for some many months, so here is the clunky version. My proposition for today's sermon is: Scripture teaches us plainly and irrefutably that an integral component to the Revelation of Jesus Christ is a worldwide disposition where most -- if not all -- of mankind will be possessed with the co-occurring disorders of mental illness and substance abuse.

To fulfill our twofold duty of -- (1) having an ***"understanding of the time, to know what Israel ought to do"*** (1 Chronicles 12:32), and (2) properly discerning in this context ***"what manner of persons ought [we] to be in all holy conversation and godliness"*** (2 Peter 3:11) -- we must have a solid grasp on what God has declared He will do to prepare the human race for that day; that period. As Charles reminded us two weeks ago, God created time; and as Christ showed our beloved friend John, ***"companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ"*** (Revelation 1:9) while in the Isle of Patmos, He has determined and He will at the appointed hour declare ***"that there should be time no longer"*** (Revelation 10:6). Despite our human tendency toward bending all events to our own temporal experiences, the solemn and delightful truth is that the human race has been allotted a finite period of existence, and the exclusive source text for understanding the conclusion of the earthly time experiment requires us to parse out the signs of the times. Specifically in relation to that last time:

***"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." (1 Thessalonians 5:4)***

So as I deliver this analysis, in support of my proposition, I ask that you frame your considerations of these materials in the following terms: You must understand that human history is not some natural evolutionary process for our community society -- or even the global society -- as humans stretch to understand themselves and their potential. Rather, it is a deliberate, beautifully-intricate, curious bit of providential tapestry woven by the loving hands of our omnipotent King -- to reveal His ***"glory and majesty, dominion and power"***. (Jude 1:25) So, let us now to the work.

***"This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."*** (Daniel 4:17)

I want to take a moment to construct a platform for our understanding of my premise, using this exemplary story. Daniel chapter four is known to be a recording of events that occurred about nine years before the death of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. This recording was entered by Nebuchadnezzar himself, during the final year of his life while, he intimates: ***"I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me."*** (Daniel 4:36) Because it was such a wondrous recording of God's majestic work, critically relevant to the eschatological work that Daniel was appointed in providence to do, it was provided him to be included in this inspired Canon. Bless God!

The kingdom of Babylon -- as any student of Scripture must testify -- is potently symbolic and relevant to the understanding of postdiluvian history, and particularly relevant to the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. Babylon's conquering of Judah in the fifth century BC began the period of time during which the Jewish kingdom was put under subjection to the Gentiles. Ezekiel's prophecy of the Babylonian captivity even declared that ***"it shall be the time of the Heathen"*** (Ezekiel 30:3). That time -- which opened with Nebuchadnezzar's sacking of Jerusalem -- has yet to close. You should recall that, at the cusp of Christ's final victory at Armageddon, it states:

***"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."*** (Revelation 16:17-19)

Every great population of humanity since the dawn of creation has lifted up its hand against God's anointed in the earth ... but Babylon gets the memorial. It is the name that signifies the work of God in appointing the great conflict of Canaan, written in ***"the book of the wars of the LORD"*** (Numbers 21:14). From the days of Nimrod's Tower of Babel, the nation-building habits of mankind have expressed the human desire to ***"break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."*** (Psalm 2:3). Literal Babylon expressed it magnificently, under King Nebuchadnezzar; and spiritual Babylon -- the essence of every false religious system that rules in the vain hearts of mankind -- has done likewise in consuming the ***"souls of men"*** (Revelation 18:13) and making herself the enemy of God, Christ, and His Bride the Church. In the days of Christ's Revelation, that human passion will come to its fullest expression as intimated under the operation of the sixth vial, to wit:

***"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working***

***miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." (Revelation 16:12-14)***

So, when we read the words from Nebuchadnezzar -- that grand iteration of Antichrist that was used as the rod of God's judgment upon the Children of Judah ... upon Jerusalem ... upon the house of God situated atop Mount Zion -- we should soberly examine their import. When those words are recorded among a book of eschatology, we should open our eyes and hearts to know how we can be admonished, ***"upon whom the ends of the world are come."*** (1 Corinthians 10:11).

It is not my intention to expound the whole of Daniel chapter four, or the events magnificently displayed in that historical drama. Anybody who has read it knows that it tells of God's answer to the arrogant display of the ultimate of human power and majesty. Nebuchadnezzar, please remember, was that ***"head of gold"***, in the vision Daniel displayed to and analyzed for him many years earlier in the tyrant's kingdom. The purest of human power and dominion. The greatest of all things the world offers to the greatest human sovereign the world has seen. It is the *message*, the *object lesson* that Scripture tells us is to come from that drama that I'm considering today. Like Pharaoh is a type of God expressing His power in the deliverance of His people from the captivity of the wicked usurper ... Nebuchadnezzar is a glorious type of God's use of a particular and amazing weapon in His arsenal against a powerful human King.

This message comes in two primary points relevant to our discussion: First, who is directing this epic showdown; and second, what triggered the need for God's intervention? If we learn these two things, I believe we can be edified about not simply *what* is coming upon that last generation of mankind ... but *how* and *why*!

This passage tells us that the ***"matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones:"*** (Daniel 4:17a), but what does that mean? In verse 13 and verse 23 of the chapter, we see that the ***"watcher and ... holy one came (was coming) down from heaven"***. What's that all about? Who is this "watcher" and "holy one"? Some expositors say it is an angel; others intimate some involvement of the elect Saints. The term "holy one" (lower case) is used in Scripture to identify the High Priest (Deuteronomy 33:8) and the prophet (Psalm 89:19), two human offices uniquely referring to the elect. Elders are known in scripture as "watchmen", since we have the duty to diligently oversee the safety and edification of the members of the body. This word "watcher" intimates one who is "awake and active" (the character of the saints), as opposed to a slumbering sluggard (the character of the wicked ... at least as it pertains to the things of God). We also know that angels are called Seraphim, intimating their high energy and perpetual motion in the doing of God's will. The elect angels are certainly holy, as they are called in their presence with Christ at His return and in His kingdom (Matthew 25:31; Revelation 14:10).

I submit that the two ideas are not mutually exclusive; as we are instructed in this blessed book about how intimately the elect members of these two races operate in influence over matters providential. Even in this same book, our friend Daniel is told by the angel who flew to his aid:

***"At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."***  
(Daniel 9:23)

Daniel is moved by God to make demands and supplications in accordance with the expressed promises He made. Commandments thereafter go forth to the members of that most powerful race who have commission to ***"minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation"*** (Hebrews 1:14). Those then ***"fly swiftly"*** (Daniel 9:21), and tend to the business commissioned. As intricate operatives under the influence of the same Spirit, they are symbiotic and inseparable. Consider this in relation to the cataclysmic events of The Revelation:

***"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."*** (Revelation 8:3-5)

The ***"watchers"*** and the ***"holy ones"*** are the human and angelic elect working together -- with the weapons of our warfare -- to the mighty (through God) ***"pulling down of strong holds"***. (2 Corinthians 10:4) These, as God's emissaries, brought forth the message to great king Nebuchadnezzar -- King of Babylon ... Antichrist's third iteration in the earth ... concentrated power and majesty of the human condition in its purest form -- that God rules man!

***"And [Nebuchadnezzar's army] shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it. Then shall [Nebuchadnezzar's] mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power unto his god."*** (Habakkuk 1:10-11)

I put the proper noun for the relevant pronouns in this prophetic passage from Habakkuk, because it is important to see what is spoken about this Babylonian king. He was ordained, according to the next verse in the passage, ***"for judgment"*** against a rebellious house of Judah. But he got full of himself and went way past the commission he received! He offended God by taking the glory of his expanded kingdom -- including the theretofore unconquered Jerusalem -- as an indicator of the power and might of his peanut gods. He insulted God further by taking His blessed servants (Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah) and naming them according to his filthy gods (Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego). After the awful vision of the multi-metal statue (Daniel 2), he audaciously set up an idol in the plains of Dura and compelled all to

bow down to it (Daniel 3). Finally, even after receiving a vision of his own mental undoing, he still denies God's intimate control over the kingdom of men:

***"At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee."* (Daniel 4:29-31)**

His arrogance and audacity had gone too far. His denial of God's sovereignty -- in the face of so very much evidence that He was and is the only true and living God -- brought the matter to a fretting fit. The elect had to pray. The commission had to go forth. He had to be broken, for God has promised: ***"I will not give my glory unto another"* (Isaiah 48:11).**

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The method chosen -- ***"the signs and wonders that the high God"*** wrought toward this great antichrist monarch (Daniel 4:2) -- was the witting (as in, he was fully aware it was coming) removal of his *compos mentis*.

***"The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."* (Daniel 4:33)**

Gill: *"[H]is case was, that at once he fell raving mad and distracted, when they first bound him with chains, that he might not hurt himself and others, and afterwards turned him loose into the woods among the wild beasts; or perhaps into one of his parks, among the deer, hares, foxes, and such like creatures; whither he might incline to go, fancying himself to be a beast, and delight to be among them:"*

His thoughts ... his moods ... his behaviors were disordered to the degree that he was utterly incapable of dwelling among men. Such a condition is expressly threatened against those Jews who would rebel against God and His blessed and life-giving Word:

***"But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: ... The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:"* (Deuteronomy 28:15, 28)**

Gill on ***"blindness"***: *"[This] is to be understood not of the darkness of their bodily eyes, but of their minds; not being able to understand, or form a judgment of things that are as clear as noon day; and being at the utmost loss what methods to take and pursue, when they are plain and manifest before them"*.

This madness is that state of condition where the human spirit becomes so filled with trauma and wicked thoughts that it reaches overwhelm and departs from reasonable-ness. Solomon speaks of seeking to understand it in men, and particularly its prevalence in the wicked man:

***"This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead." (Ecclesiastes 9:3)***

and

***"[T]he lips of a fool will swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness." (Ecclesiastes 10:12-13)***

The foolishness of which these wicked spend themselves talking brings God's wrath upon them in the form of their madness expressed in miserable and malignant ("***mischievous***") distresses of mind. Again, as the prophet Zechariah speaks of Christ's enemies when they go down with their "***multitudes in the valley of decision***" (Joel 3:14), he speaks of this same condition consuming those villainous hordes:

***"And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness." (Zechariah 12:3-4)***

With many more expressions these blessed Scriptures identify a judicial stroke issued against those who, knowing that He is that "***high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy [meaning set apart from all others]***" (Isaiah 57:15), acts openly against that knowledge.

***"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." (Romans 1:21-22)***

The reference to "fools" intimates one who lacks the ability for rational understanding or, as this generation of sorcerers would say, has a "thought disorder". There are degrees of severity in this path from mere spiritual darkness -- that is the lot of all unregenerate mankind -- and the severe thought, mood and behavioral disorders that come upon a human to such a state that they have no more capacity to engage in the basics of life functions. All are bad. All are judicial and quite terrifying to any who know the depths of darkness to which a tender soul can go, as Abraham expressed:

***"And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him." (Genesis 15:12)***

So we should be loathe to be flippant about this discussion. This judicial stroke of madness, folly, confusion of face, even animalistic or beastly existence due to a complete absence of mind, is a very personal and sober piece of business in which God has determined very literally for that soul:

***"Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which ... repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face." (Deuteronomy 7:9-10)***

We live in a generation that -- nearly to the man and woman, old and young, child and suckling - - does not seek to know God! And when His servants introduce Him as He is, they violently oppose Him and them! When Christ said ***"this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations"*** (Matthew 24:14), I don't believe we should see this as some passive, pedestrian condition. Jon said in the movie "Hatemongers" that it occurred to him that every human being on the planet is going to have to look at these words we are putting in front of their eyes -- and they're every one going to have to decide what they each one believes. Do they love those words? Or, do they hate those words? Will they hear, or will they forebear to hear? Every man, woman, and child. Nobody gets a pass.

Now we're getting somewhere. The yeast in this bread is the knowledge of God's Word! As it spreads through the body of the dough, it creates a reaction. The more thoroughly it gets worked in, the more active it becomes. Little critters ... stirring up all kinds of friction ... reaching this part of the dough, and then another. A beautiful metaphor for this work we do. The Word is living! It doesn't lie dormant, and it's not going to return to God ***"void, but it shall accomplish that which [He] please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto [He] sent it!"*** (Isaiah 55:11).

So, we're looking at this sick, sick scene -- now twenty-six years gone. We can only see what God has been pleased to show us; but that has been a whole lot of amazing working of this living Word! We've planted, and we've watered, but we know that until God gives the increase, it will not be (1 Corinthians 3:7). We get up in the morning and sow precious seed -- and in the evening we dare not withhold our hand! But we don't know whether, when, how, or what shall prosper (Ecclesiastes 11:6). How many Scriptural metaphors should I bring to bear on this message? God knows what's coming! God is not slack, concerning what He has promised will come! (2 Peter 3:9).

So, we're looking at this sick, sick scene -- now twenty-six years gone. What have we observed but that, as the old prophet declared:

***"Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." (Isaiah 1:5-6)***

On every continent, they see the Word faithfully preached from a tiny little, humble body of believers who want nothing from them but obedience to that God in whose hands their lives have consistance. It's like Paul told those in Thessalonica:

***"For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing." (1 Thessalonians 1:8)***

Sadly, on every continent, they reject that blessed Word -- the stone which the builders of old rejected and has nevertheless become the chief cornerstone of this house! Simultaneous to this global rejection of God and His Word is the evidence that God has given this nation and this world their just recompense through an epidemic of not just physical health failings, but dramatically failures in mental stability. The number of identified mental health disorders have tripled in the six decades since the fools of the world jumped into that grotesque war and then returned to their homes with collections of diseases and debaucheries to pass down to their succeeding generations. Each built upon the ***"hard speeches" (Jude 1:15)*** of the last; more aggressively working iniquity and more aggressively treasuring up for themselves ***"wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God"***. (Romans 2:5) For so great an arrogance -- calling themselves "The Greatest Generation" -- they have made themselves most deserving of the righteous recompense of Alzheimer's and other forms of raging organic dementia.

***"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient". (Romans 1:28)***

This term means, in strict application, a mind that does not stand the test. It's broken; incapable of sustaining rational thought. The ways in which this judicial stroke has exhibited itself in the human condition outpaces the knowledge base of those trained to track and treat it -- and far more the technology and pharmacology to bring some semblance of normalcy back to the soul afflicted with the disorder. Those of us whose careers have brought us face to face with this sad and sick condition of society know well the severity of the stroke -- and can be sore vexed with the proposition that we are so deserving of the same thing, for our multitude of sins against our God and King.

And speaking of pharmacology, we come back to where we began. Let us examine the relevant import of this passage, with an eye toward understanding the times:



***"Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries [i.e., active and extensive use of pharmacology], nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." (Revelation 9:21)***

This is the last verse of Revelation chapter nine. It is in the midst of the horrors unleashed upon the inhabitants of the earth under the sounding of the sixth trumpet -- the second of the three woes (because of the exponentially greater carnage to be poured out). For all previous readings I've made of this passage -- and those here likely know there have been very, very many -- I have taken this to be a listing of exemplary sins or shortcomings that the world was possessed of, for which the wrath of God has been expressed so violently. Remember, please, that a full third of the earth's inhabitants -- some billions of persons -- are being slaughtered by these millions of monstrous creatures coming up out of the Euphrates River!

No.

***"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:" (2 Peter 2:9)***

This is a litany of ways that God has "pickled" that last pre-advent generation of man to make him utterly incapable of thinking rationally about his circumstances, and thereby perhaps bring an end to the suffering. These rabid creatures cannot think to stop their barbarous lifestyles; their libidinous, bestial, and public sex; their "take what I want, when I want it, from whom I want it" thefts; and their perpetual state of drug-addled, broke-brained confusion and delusion! How wondrously relevant, then, are the words about Antichrist's rise to fame:

***"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:" (2 Thessalonians 2:11)***

In a perpetual state of chemically-induced confusion and delusion, these mad creatures are in a schizophrenic fret -- imagining that they can silence God, even while time and again they are introduced to the horrifying evidence of His majesty, dominion, and power! As they have come to love their chemicals, they will bring more ... and greater ... and stronger ... and varied to the game; both "legal" and illegal.

***"For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them." (Psalms 75:8)***

Symbolizing the fullness of their destruction, this language demonstrates the intensifying of the recompense that vile and fully-rebellious generation will experience -- and appropriately through the intoxicating and delusion-inducing chemicals they consume as part of their very existences. The use of this double entendre does not but accentuate the power of this judgment, rendering the wicked utterly incapable of remedy or recovery:

***"Make ye him drunken: for he magnified himself against the LORD: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision." (Jeremiah 48:26)***

What, then, do we say to our generation, as we witness them daily become more compromised with thought, behavioral, and mood disorders? What, then, do we say to our generation, as we witness them blaspheming their God -- in the rank pride of their demon-possessed hearts -- and therefore being left to wallow in chemicals in vain attempts to disconnect from the horrific reality that God's commandments are not going to go away? It is a cause of great heart-sickness to watch them. It is a cause of great fear to consider that we deserve the same. It is a cause of great rejoicing to have in our daily walk evidence that we are given ears to hear the klaxon alarm and ***"flee the wrath to come"***. (Matthew 3:7)

We must testify to this generation that this is yet another sign of the coming of God. A world of antichrists who ***"[deny] that Jesus is the Christ ... [and deny] the Father and the Son."*** (1 John 2:22) are simultaneously bankrupting the world's governments to cope with perpetual addictions to chemicals used to cope with their broken minds and hearts. We have to tell them that their ***"judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."*** (2 Peter 2:3)

We have to go to where these matters are joined, and tell them that God is the author of their afflictions, and that except for those to whom His mercy will shine, it is the preparing of this earth's population to be utterly unable to find a way out,

***"[W]hen the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:"*** (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)

We must tell them, "God Sends Mental Illness: Fear Him".

I love you all.

Amen.