

Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, August 29, 2021

“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)

There are exciting and terrifying messages in this passage out of Daniel. Since I have my very best hope that the souls in this church house this morning are at their most awakened and tuned and enflamed condition right now! Having come into this building fresh from some beautiful street preaching ... having sung a most comforting song about the absolute sovereignty of God ... having joined your hearts in a prayer to that God for our edification and our love for Him, His Word, and our Savior Jesus Christ ... our souls are quivering with the joy of His presence among us. It has to be the very best time to anchor some absolutes.

It was time for something to happen. Each day the Jewish saints lived under the awful tyranny of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar; they saw his wickedness set as the policy in that world government. They were vexed by the zeitgeist of idolatry and every form of filthy living that possessed that generation of humans who believed they were unconquerable and who believed their notions of what was right and wrong had to be accurate ... because look at how powerful a nation they were? This was after Nebuchadnezzar had been given that horrifying vision of the great statue demonstrating the certainty of the conquering Christ's earthly kingdom, and apparently all he was impressed by was that he was the ***“head of gold” (Daniel 2:38)*** so he could continue his worldly swagger. Something had to happen! The watcher that was implanted in the earth sought the face of the Lord and prayed for the satanic pitch to be broken and the enemy brought down.

Hundreds of years earlier, the sodomites were swollen with their pride and arrogance and hateful sin-obsessed tyranny and they vexed the righteous soul of that beleaguered friend Lot who dwelled among them and saw and heard their filthy words against God and His holy standards. They were not content to just be proud sinners ... they were violent and tyrannical with their laws and practices such that they presumed to compel the visiting angels to have sex with them. The laws were written and enforced to make them the preferred demographic and their grotesque practices the expected and protected mores of that society. Something had to happen! The watcher that was implanted in the earth sought the face of the Lord and prayed for the satanic pitch to be broken and the enemy brought down.

Hundreds of years before that Noah, that blessed ***“preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5)*** did pitch forensic and physical battle with the monstrous antediluvian sinners before God who corrupted the earth and filled it with violence (Genesis 6:11). He patiently pled with those souls in the prison of their lust and idolatry and filthy practices for 120 years while he worked feverishly on building the ark. They hated him for it, and were intent upon removing him and all his gentle and loving warnings that a reckoning was on the way. Something had to happen! The watcher

that was implanted in the earth sought the face of the Lord and prayed for the satanic pitch to be broken and the enemy brought down.

Now we're coming to the end of all the flesh. In nearly every corner of this planet the people have wholly departed from God and His Word and His standards and His commandments. In every place the people, even in the face of the most severe of living conditions, still pray to false gods and demand their freedom from their Creator. There is no place where sexual perversion has not taken root – adultery, fornication, sodomy, strange flesh of every form and stripe! There is no place where pride isn't promoted and bellowed about – even while every objective indicator should have them debased and shamefaced, to the man, woman, child, and suckling! Every institution in every land is consumed with it. Peace has all but been removed, so the only language they speak in this day is some form of conflict; political, social, economic, military – conflict. Any soul living in this generation who is given even a hint of sobriety ... or the slightest concern for the laws of God ... or the least interest in living a life that is not completely given over to ***“the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”*** (1 John 2:16) will experience near continual vexation of spirit. Something has to happen! The watchers who are implanted in this earth must seek the face of the Lord and pray for the satanic pitch to be broken and this most arrogant, froward and monstrous enemy of God to be brought down.

Why? Because the people living in the earth need to learn about that mighty and most High God that rules in the kingdom of men! Because no matter how many soldiers you train ... no matter how many horrific devices for destruction you manufacture ... no matter how many human beings you demonstrate your willingness to wipe out with your weaponry ... no matter how many prison camps or reeducation centers or cancel-culture systems you put into place ... no matter how many politicians you line up to proclaim ... no matter how many media clowns you have in place to echo and broadcast and dominate in the airwaves ... it is God who determines what happens! God moves in the vile, selfish, wicked hearts of men – making full use of the powerfully deceitful angel Satan as ONE of His tools – to make decisions and take action. All so that God can give the kingdom of men to ***“whomsoever he will”***!

And it is a guarantee that there will rarely be a decent human being ever to be made a ruler of men. The closing clause to this passage ... ***“and setteth up over it the basest of men”*** ... is popularly misunderstood. In context, and in the proper treatment of the actual word used, it is not saying that those who are placed over the kingdom of men – e.g., ***“basest”*** – are vile and filthy. It is true enough, in nearly every instance, that the human being who gains such prominence will pursue their pride and lusts, because they are taught such a lifestyle by their close kin, friends, teachers, preachers, and the zeitgeist of their generation. Perfect example is looking at how this nation engaged with that filthy, libidinous human being Donald Trump. He was a renowned and brazen pervert, yet this schizophrenic nation of persons fawned and vilified him about those nasty practices. He learned that lifestyle in this society ... with perverts of every stripe on every side of him his entire life. Joe Biden is fundamentally no different, except that he manages to maintain a sheen of civility that Trump (and his votaries) reject. Both are adulterers ... both actually love to slaughter human beings ... both live for their own comforts and luxuries, without any sincere desire for serving God. In any scriptural sense, they're identical.

But that is not the import of this clause. Rather, we are to learn how it is that God confuses the machinations of mankind in the matter of how they imagine establishing national and world leaders. The word **“basest”** is the Hebrew *“sh^ephal”* (“shef-al”), and literally translates to a person who is of the lowliest of stations. Here’s how the expositor John Calvin articulates the proper understanding of this clause:

“In a change so remarkable as this [referring to God’s 7-year punishment of Nebuchadnezzar by making him a beast], God’s power shines forth better while he raises from the dust those who were formerly obscure and contemptible, and even sets them above kings. When this happens, profane men say, God is playing with them, and rolls men about like balls in his hand, which are first tossed upwards and then thrown down upon the ground. But they do not consider the reason why God by open proofs wishes to shew how we are under his absolute power, on which our condition entirely depends; when we do not comprehend this of our own accord, examples are necessarily set before us by which we are compelled to perceive what almost all are willingly ignorant of. We now understand the whole intention of the Prophet. Angels seek from God by continual prayers to declare his own power to mortals, and thus to lay prostrate the proud who think to excel by their own power and industry, or else by chance, or by the help of men. To induce God to punish men for their sacrilegious deeds, the angels desire him to prostrate them, and thus to shew himself to be not only the king and ruler of heaven, but also of earth. Now, this not only happens in the case of a single king, but we know history to be full of such proofs.”

Humankind, in their endless arrogance and pride, will think to rise in power and prominence such that they will take the very throne away from God. They will build up to the heavens so that they might reach God’s palace and demand he not just see them as equal, but accept them as *in fact* morally superior. Breathtaking arrogance! The creature engaging the Creator. Thus it was that Nimrod thought to build **“a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven”** (Genesis 11:4). Yet God, in His perfect providence, scatters them abroad and confuses their language and counsel. Watts expressed it beautifully in one of my favorites of his songs:

*Chained to his throne, a volume lies,
With all the fates of men,
With ev'ry angel's form and size,
Drawn by th' Eternal pen.*

*His providence unfolds the book,
And makes his counsels shine;
Each op'ning leaf, and ev'ry stroke,
Fulfills some deep design.*

*Here he exalts neglected worms
To scepters and a crown;
And there the foll'wing page he turns,
And treads the monarch down*

We have a duty, my friends, to petition our God – through our Lord Jesus Christ – to disrupt the wicked works of men and to confuse their faces and bring down the arrogant and proud workers of iniquity. We have a duty to be aware of the goings on in the world we occupy ... not just our small, vain lives. We are watchers, and as watchers we have the responsibility to occupy this spiritual space and make ourselves aware. When Antichrist rises to his prominence and prepares to make the final assault on men and angels, the saints of God are the ones who must meet that engagement and make perpetual petition to God for His intervention.

So, today, we are continuing our examination of the words of Christ in speaking with His apostles on Mt. Olivet, as recorded in Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Remember, that the focus of Christ's words is that time when the world has been fully and finally prepared for the dispensational change from the New Testament period to the earthly reign of Christ. The question His apostles asked was ***"what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3)***. In my last sermon, we discussed the behaviors of the earth's population toward the saints of God during the time when God's opening judgments related to His Revelation are being poured out upon them. In each of the accounts provided, we found and discussed six elements of their conduct: Betrayal, heresy, apostacy, hatred, violence, and affliction. We also examined the influences of the sodomites in the warfare against the saints, and the complete absence of any ability of those souls to make use of any human-based remedy. It is a time of life disruption and satanic influences that will press them to turn exclusively to God in prayer for defense and deliverance.

At the close of each apostle's account regarding the assault on the saints, Christ makes a pronouncement that opens for us the opportunity to examine one of the core doctrines of our faith in the context of eschatology. Both Matthew and Mark use the same exact language: ***"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."*** (Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:13). Luke's account includes some significantly more expressive and instructive language to the words of Christ in His comforting message to His saints. ***"In your patience possess ye your souls."*** (Luke 21:19). The doctrine this brings up for discussion is the perseverance or preservation of the saints.

For those who may be less familiar, I want to review what was developed in times past as a simplified way of understanding the doctrines of grace. These scriptural principles that should be embedded in your heart and mind to assist your human understanding of what is the purpose of God toward His saints in the earth. I caution against making these points a religion to itself – as many vain professors have done through the centuries since the French theologian John Calvin helped to develop them in the 16th century. We do not worship men. It is the unbeliever who, as Paul articulates, ***"changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man"*** (Romans 1:23). John Calvin is not God and should never be treated as though he was anything but a corruptible man. However, God gifted him with the capacity to crystalize the doctrines of grace in a simplified manner, like this: **T**otal depravity; **U**nconditional election; **L**imited atonement; **I**rresistible grace; **P**erseverance of the saints. T.U.L.I.P.

Each of these TULIP doctrines help the student of scripture to maintain an orderly and disciplined consideration of all the writings contained in the book. They do not replace proper reference to the book. So, when some human being tells you that he/she is a “four-point Calvinist”, you are able to immediately discern two things. First, that human is a religious fraud, and has no evidence of grace and second, that human is fixated on man rather than God. You cannot possibly believe one of the five points of Calvinism without a full-throated belief in the other four. No one of them stands alone, or stands without all of the other four. This is not a sermon about the TULIP doctrines, though you can go to the website www.godhatesfags.com and consume the scriptural underpinnings of those doctrines. Today, I’m only going to examine the fifth of those doctrines – and specifically in the context of eschatology.

John did a pair of excellent sermons that exhaustively examined the perseverance of the saints.ⁱ God determined for Himself which human beings His love would be bestowed upon ... before the world began. God then wrote providence so that each of those souls – in his or her time in the earth – would be called, justified and when their life was over, glorified (Romans 8:29-30). That being the case, no power in heaven or earth is capable of detaching any one of those souls from God. Since, as those sermons point out, the scriptural support for the proposition is such that you might need to simply insert all of the verses of the Bible into the sermon, John’s work only makes reference to and examines a small sampling of Old Testament and New Testament passages that prove the doctrine. That is how comprehensively this doctrine is sounded throughout scripture. Similarly, I will have to curb my use to just a few verses that articulate the doctrine plainly within the context of eschatology ... beginning with the present passages.

Just before Christ says “**but he that shall endure**”, He describes another group of persons who were standing shoulder to shoulder with those who endure, to wit:

“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” (Matthew 24:12)

The dichotomy helps to discern the characteristic that comes forth in the soul who has been granted the gift of grace, and therefore will persevere. It is the constancy of an anchored soul. The word “**endure**” is the Greek “*hupomeno*” (“*hoop-om-en’-o*”), which expresses the notion that they remain ... they abide ... they “tarry behind”, as Strong’s concordance articulates it. One might be tempted to shift their lens to stoicism, an ancient Greek school of philosophy founded at Athens by Zeno of Citium. The school taught “that virtue, the highest good, is based on knowledge; the wise [they say] live in harmony with the divine Reason (also identified with Fate and Providence) that governs nature, and are indifferent to the vicissitudes of fortune and to pleasure and pain.” So, one might allege that these souls who endure are not divinely sustained, but only stupidly stoic in the face of the tremendous threats and terrors they face. But stoicism is human-focused, and is not what scripture teaches.

“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon

the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.” (Hebrews 6:17-19)

The endurance ... the steadfastness ... the continuance ... the abiding still ... is not because of a strength in the human or the human spirit. It is because that soul is anchored to the throne of God – ***“that within the veil”***, where the Shechinah dwelt in the holy of holies. Since God owns that soul, and has given that soul to Christ for the price of His coming to suffer and to die for remission of that soul’s sins, that soul will not ever move. Those who are vain professors of love for the brethren – the “agape” they know to reference the familiarity between the co-elect in the earth – find that affection they believed they had wax cold and fade away. But the elect do not depend upon human emotion or affection; so they are unmoved by the assault that most certainly moves the unsaved soul.

These words of Christ also demonstrate the personal nature of this gift of perseverance. He says ***“the same shall be saved”***. The word coupling underlined here is the Greek “houtos” (“hoo’-tos”), and it means the process of identifying the specific one or ones ... because they are just *that* specifically identified in the Covenant of Grace. Because they are just *that* specifically identified in the Book of Redemption; from which Christ alone is capable of removing the seals in Revelation six and seven. The personal nature of these words is further amplified when Christ, in parable, identifies the time when this intense and explosive period comes to final crescendo:

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” (Matthew 13:24)

This is a personal process. If you are a tare, regardless of how close you have become to the wheat, you will be separated and bound into the bundle with your satanic co-tares and burned. If you are a grain of wheat, you will be set free from the influences of those tares and finally gathered into the barn. It is very personal and very exact. When John the Baptist articulates it, he assures us that Christ will ***“thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner.” (Matthew 3:12)***, meaning that there will not a tare be left among the wheat, or a grain of wheat left with the tares. These that ***“went out from us”*** did so because they are ***“not of us”*** as we’re told by the same John who wrote the Revelation (1 John 2:19) ... ***“that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us [i.e., wheat]”***. It is a very, very personal bit of business.

And the assault from the forces of the great adversary Satan is personal as well. We know it is written how he ***“as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8)***, but what

specifically does that look like? This sermon of Christ's on Mt. Olivet certainly paints a grim picture for what those gentle souls face when the battle for the remaining souls on the earth reaches the day of decision. The institutions of men ... the whole world over ... are joined in this effort. Governments bring to bear their judicial, executive, and legislative branches – by whatever title each is given in different sovereign expressions – to prevent the Book of Redemption from being opened. Eagerly joining with those massive human institutions is the proverbial “fourth estate” ... slimy and self-absorbed members of the media barking the party line of humanism and self-determination. The educational systems have and will spoon-feed rebellion against God and hatred of His servants from the earliest formation of young minds. Entertainment drips the beauties of sin and pride and rebellion from every report – either openly promoting wrong as right, or mocking right as wrong. Private sector joins with social media to intimidate, vilify, marginalize, mock, and terrorize every human who will not submit to the glories of the human being. All of it – through a billion paths and across an endless stream, like the individual threads in a world-sized tapestry – designed to send one message to the saints: God cannot save you from us!

“Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.” (Romans 9:27-29)

Paul writes of this period of eschatology, though with his focus more immediately upon the returning Jews. The doctrine of which I speak is the same ... the focus of Antichrist and his army collected against Jewry at that hour have the design to thwart the preservation of the saints, thinking to remove the elect Jews along with the slaughter of all the Jews. The severity of the conflict brings such horrors to bear for the elect among them, that the time allowed for it – for the sake of those righteous who dwell in the earth – must be cut short. It is a merciful thing that God brings to His servants who are put in extreme test, as Christ Himself articulates:

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was 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.” (Matthew 24:21-22)

For the sake of the fulfillment of the Covenant of Grace, for the salvation of the souls of God's elect saints, the work of Satan and Antichrist is cut short. The ability they have to terrorize and kill any of the saints ... the ability they have to intimidate them into joining the non-elect in ***“denying the Lord that bought them” (2 Peter 2:1)*** ... the ability to confuse and distress them until they become ***“ashamed before [Christ] at his coming” (1 John 2:28)*** ... is cut short and Satan is denied his quarry. The saints persevere.

What is left to examine, as it pertains to this sweet reminder of Christ that despite how severe the assault will become that the saints will persevere, are the additional and interesting words of Christ recorded by Luke; ***“In your patience possess ye your souls.”*** The word translated ***“patience”*** here is nearly identical in meaning to the word ***“endure”*** in Matthew's and Mark's accounts. It expresses continuance and steadfastness in conflict. While Luke's words do not change anything about what Matthew and Mark recorded, it is expressed in a way that gives more beauty and color and clarity to this eschatological and doctrinal diamond. When John is

delivering the amazing details of Christ's Revelation, he gives us two intimate glimpses of how the elect demonstrate their blessedness in the heat of the conflict. They are both articulated in the heat of the movement by Antichrist to compel the taking of his mark, to wit:

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.” (Revelation 13:8-10)

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” (Revelation 14:9-12)

The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is on full display here. The elect are distinguished in their behavior when the proverbial world is on fire, and they are pressed to the disastrous extreme of their human flesh. While all the natural inclination of the human is to save ourselves by engaging in strategy and tactics – i.e., taking captive and killing our adversary – the saints do no such thing. Rather, they steadfastly keep themselves to the commandments of God in how they live, and they faithfully wait upon Him for their deliverance. This is because they have embedded in them the anchoring hope that the outcome is determined and therefore ***“know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)***. So there is no need for human machination – stoicism or otherwise – in the face of this cataclysmic shift in the world.

Something must be done. We can see how this generation is galloping to that day when peace will be utterly gone ... the staff of life will be utterly removed ... the plagues will be unremitting ... the natural creation will go into spasms of death ... the trumpets of the angels will sound and the battle between Satan and saints will climb the steep and final mountain of decision. We must pray without ceasing ... we must stay upon the name of our God ... we must articulate that our God ***“doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Daniel 4:35)***.

I love you all. Amen.

ⁱ See sermons on preservation and perseverance of the saints on February 18, 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/WBC20180218PDF> and April 22, 2018 <https://tinyurl.com/WBC20180422PDF>.