

The Time of the End, the 8th Wonder of the World, and True Freedom

Opening Hymn: #415 Christ the Lord, All Power Possessing

Scripture: Daniel, chapter 12, verses 1, 2, and 9, 10

Closing Hymn: Music # 305; Words – “I Need Jesus”

Silent Prayer

Beloved friends, we are so abundantly blessed. We know and love the only true God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. We have access to the Bible – and the Spirit of Prophecy – in our own language. We are 7th-day Adventist Christians, part of a small group – a remnant movement – called to give the world a message of hope and truth in the midst of the pain and confusion that permeates the lives of most of our neighbors around the world today.

My message today will make particular reference to this country – the United States of America – in part because this is my country, but also, because the Bible prophetically references this nation.

The Bible tells us that the prophets looked forward to seeing our day in the light of prophecy, and that much of what they experienced was for our admonition, upon whom the end of the world has come. (I Cor. 10:11)

Today I hope to convey to you the nearness of the coming of Jesus – in light of Biblical history, in light of Biblical prophecy, with some observations from the Spirit of Prophecy, and with some insights from contemporary history. We are going to look at the 8th Wonder of the World, and see how that applies to our lives today. All of this will be done with the express, specific intent to challenge each of us into action to deepen our love for the Savior in order to hasten the coming of Jesus. Let us pray.

Prayer

Jesus loves you! Amen! Amen! Jesus also loves all those other people who do not know Him. Amen? Amen! Jesus loves those people who we understand from His Word are wading in the polluted waters of Babylon, desperately calling them

to, “Come out of her, My people!” Jesus wants to use us to call those people out of spiritual infidelity before it is too late.

Before it is too late... Too late... How late is it? According to Paul, in Romans 13, verse 11 and 12:

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Paul wrote that almost 2,000 years ago. He wanted people to be mobilized in his day, and he had a sense of urgency; today I want us to be mobilized in our day, and to have a sense of urgency. What’s the difference? The difference friends, is time.

Typically, when we teach the prophecies of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, we do so in order to validate the veracity of the Holy Scriptures. That is, we show that God can be trusted because He predicted the rise and fall of kingdoms, what he predicted came true, and so we can trust His word. This is legitimate and it is valid. But I want us to look very briefly at those prophecies together today – along with some other prophecies – for a different reason: to show where we are at in terms of the Biblical time line of history.

For many of us, the vision given in Daniel chapter 2, is a familiar story. An idol worshipping king, Nebuchadnezzar, sees an idol of mixed metals, and he is confused. I believe it is possible that God used an idol in these dreams because He is referring to the religious side of these kingdoms.

Just a few more pages over in our Bibles, in Daniel chapter 7, we read about these same kingdoms, but here they are represented as violent beasts bent on destruction and conquest. It is when the religious powers unite with the power of the government that there is persecution against God’s people.

You may review the specific texts that identify these kingdoms in Daniel 2:37 – 44, and Daniel 7: 17 – 27. For the sake of brevity, I outline the kingdoms, and the approximate dates of the empires, as follows: [SLIDE]

Babylon	Head of Gold	Lion	626 – 539 BC
Medo-Persia	Chest of Silver	Bear	539 – 331 BC
Greece	Midriff of Bronze	Leopard	331 – 146 BC
Rome	Legs of Iron	Ugly Beast	146 BC – 476 AD

We just covered over a thousand years of history, all of which was prophesied by God. Each of these prophecies came true. These kingdoms reigned in succession just as God revealed to Daniel.

Then there is another power that is revealed to Daniel and to John the Revelator, and also to the Apostle Paul as described in II Thessalonians chapter 2. Please turn in your Bibles to Daniel 7:24, 25.

And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. ²⁵ And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

This little horn beast arises out of the midst of the collapse of the Roman Empire, and it is evident that it is a particularly diabolical force of deception and evil. It is prophesied that this power would speak blasphemous words against the Most High God, would think to change times and laws – God’s time and God’s law – and would persecute God’s people for over a thousand years; 1,260 years to be exact. You can read about these time periods in Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:6,14;13:5. It is clear that God wants us to understand this time frame because he told it to us 7 times, and three different formats, yet He hides it from the enemy.

I would like us to look at the context in which John the Revelator explains this hideous power. But before we look at the pretender to the throne, let us look at what Jesus is doing to unmask the deception. Please turn with me in your Bible to Revelation 11:17-19:

We give thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. ¹⁸ And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the

prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

¹⁹ And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

In heaven we see the temple of God open, Jesus enters into the Most Holy Place, and judgment begins. This is the opening of the Day of Judgment – the anti-typical Day of Atonement – the time when Jesus goes in before His Father to intercede for the final cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, and the final cleansing of His people.

Follow this thought we me. Please jump forward four chapters to Revelation 15, verses 4 through 8:

Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

⁵ And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:⁶ And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.⁷ And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

⁸ And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

The scene just described depicts the High Priest – Jesus Christ – coming out of the Temple in heaven because judgment has been completed. Jesus has finished interceding on behalf of humanity, and every case has been decided for eternity.

We saw the opening of the judgment in heaven in Revelation 11; we see the close of the judgment scene in heaven in Revelation 15. When will this be? When will probation close. We do not know, but it cannot be long off. We have traced Biblical and prophetic history from the establishment of literal Babylon through to the judgment of spiritual Babylon which began in 1844. We are now awaiting the conclusion of Jesus' intercession in heaven.

What takes place between the end of Revelation chapter 11 and the end of Revelation 15 is a depiction of the final forces of evil confederated to battle against God and His children. The message given in Revelation chapter 12 through chapter 14 is what is called the “Great Controversy.” This is the most succinct, clearest description of the battle between good and evil – between Christ and Satan – the battle that began in heaven and ends with Jesus and the heavenly host coming to earth to end the controversy about the character of God and His law.

In Revelation chapter 12 we read about a dragon – Satan – who, according to Isaiah 14, wants to take the place of the Most High. Satan actually wants to be God. In the next chapter of Revelation – chapter 13 – we are introduced to the illegitimate heir to Satan’s reign on earth, the man of sin, and his apostate system created to masquerade as an impostor to the ministry of Jesus Christ. It is this counterfeit to the son of God that we read also about in Daniel that speaks blasphemy, that seeks to change times and laws, and that persecutes the saints of God for 1,260 years.

The final actor in the satanic triumvirate is the second beast of Revelation 13. This beast initially appears like a lamb, but possesses the power of the state, or government, while mingling with apostate spiritual powers of its day. My purpose here today is not to delve into the details of the identifying marks of this power; you can read about those in “The Great Controversy.” We will only highlight here that this second beast is raised to power after the deadly wound of the first beast – the anti-Christ – is inflicted, it is a system of government that is supported of the people, by the people, and for the people, and that this beast unites with an apostate form of the Protestant church to manipulate people. We are, of course, referring to the United States of America.

Before I share about how and why this beast may be involved in the most destructive persecution of the people of God in history – and make no mistake, the Bible says that it will – I want to introduce you to one of the primary factors that I believe will contribute to her fall from being a liberty loving and freedom promoting power, to one that persecutes those do not abide by her heaven defying dictates. I am referring to the 8th wonder of the world.

The 8th wonder of the world – what is that? you may ask. You’ve probably heard of the 7 wonders of the ancient world – the hanging gardens of Babylon, the Great Pyramids of Egypt, and there were others. The 8th wonder of the world is slightly more modern, and much more ubiquitous.

The 8th wonder of the world is... compound interest. Compound interest. What does that mean? It means that as long as you have debt, you will have to pay interest not only on the amount that you borrowed, but you have to pay interest on the interest, and then interest on the interest on the interest, and so on. It is an amazing mathematical calculation that permits the lender to accumulate significant amounts of wealth in compounded fashion, while driving the borrower further into massive amounts of debt unless they have the discipline to repay the interest and original principle. Why do I call this the 8th wonder of the world? Because it operates unseen and unspoken of behind the scenes of so many modern business transactions that it is a wonder that people do not take more note of it.

In a few minutes I am going to demonstrate how the 8th wonder of the world may work against us personally, but right now I would like to look at it from a Biblical and prophetic framework. Let's return to Revelation 13, and we are going to look at verses 15 and 16.

¹⁵ And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. ¹⁶ And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: ¹⁷ And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Keep in mind that the imposition of the mark of the beast requires adhering to certain financial parameters. Please join me in chapter 18 of Revelation, and let's look at a couple of verses to see how the 8th wonder of the world links to the time of the end. Let us read Revelation 18, verses 2 - 4, and then verses 10 through 13.

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

³ For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

And now verses 10 through 13 of Revelation 18:

Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

¹¹ And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: ¹² The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, ¹³ And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

Why am I making reference to verses having to do with buying and selling, with the merchants of the earth, and what does this have to do with the 8th wonder of the world – compound interest – the United States, and the mark of the beast?

At the beginning of this message we laid a foundation charting the Biblical and prophetic history of the world, clearly seeing that God is actively involved in the affairs of men, and that He predicted the rise and fall of nations and kingdoms all the way through the supremacy of the little horn power through 1798.

Succeeding that power in global dominance was the 2nd beast of Revelation 13, the United States of America, who will – in the very near future – create an image to the little horn power and cause everyone to worship this image, much like the golden idol in Daniel chapter 3. Why would the United States of America erect an image to the mother of harlots? I believe it is, at least in part, because of the 8th wonder of the world, compound interest.

The amount of debt currently owed by the federal government is \$24.9 trillion dollars; of which, \$19.0 trillion is owed to others, and the government has borrowed from the future of American retirees – our Social Security funds, among other places - \$5.9 trillion. The recent programs put in place during the COVID-19 crisis have added an additional approximately \$4 trillion in debt; the numbers are not out yet, and there is talk of another stimulus program coming some time before the election. Friends, if you want to understand who holds the power, follow the money.

Currently interest rates on long term US government debt are close to one percent. By contrast, the historical rate of return is around 5%. If interest rates return to

historic levels, given the current amount of debt owed by the government, an unfathomable amount of our Gross National Product will be consumed in interest payments. That interest will be compounded until we pay off the debt. It is now accepted by those in government, we will never actually repay these debts.

I am not going to be too explicit here, but I want to posit an idea for you to consider: who do you think our government owes all this money to? We know that almost \$6 trillion is owed to the Social Security system. It is documented that the US owes about \$1.1 trillion to the Chinese, and \$1 trillion to the Japanese. Conservatively, I think it would be fair to say that US corporations and other global financial entities are owed approximately \$5 trillion dollars. That leaves over \$10 trillion.

According to the Bible, in Proverbs 22:7, "... the borrower is servant to the lender." So the US is servant – slave – to whoever we borrowed all that money from. Who could that be?

I suspect that the US government, under the influence of apostate, spiritualistic systems, might be willing to set up an image to the power that has surreptitiously financed her global aspirations for power, all the while slowly, insidiously making the land of the free a slave in order to advance her desires for global domination. Think about this: who in the world has over \$10 trillion dollars to lend to our government to satisfy our insatiable appetite for more and more, and who would continue to contribute to our inability to exercise self-control, and why?

I would suggest that it is a power that invented a scheme whereby you could pay for forgiveness, owns the most precious jewels and art of any entity in the world, has vast land holdings across not only the US, but around the world – estimated at 177 million acres – tax free – and has ruled the world for over 1,260 years. Does anyone think that this harlot of a religious system went bankrupt in 1798? Hardly.

What does this have to do with the end of time and how we live? Our nation – under the directions of our leaders – and no, I am not being political, because neither party has demonstrated the ability to exercise restraint in engorging the public purse – has modeled for us that you need not live within your means. Most of our fellow citizens have adopted the idea that you can borrow as much as you want as long as you have the cash flow to make the next monthly payment. Consequently, like our leaders, the citizens have become financially irresponsible.

Permit me to explain with a few salient illustrations from our culture. I apologize that I do not have information for South Africa; I suspect that among those who are listening to this message, there may be parallels between the US middle class and your situation in South Africa.

The average price of a home purchased last year was \$381,900. This is across the country; some places will be higher, other places the average will be lower. At the end of 30 years, your \$381,900 house will actually become yours; you will own it. Until then, the bank owns it; you own the mortgage. At the end of that 30 years, you will have paid \$337,492 interest on a \$381,900 house, and the total cost of that home, including a ridiculously low projection for taxes and insurance, would be \$816,924. There's that 8th wonder of the world rearing its ugly head.

The average price of a new vehicle –cars and trucks - in the US last year was \$37,736. You are led to believe you can “afford” this vehicle because the car companies are now offering 84 month – 7 year – financing. As a result, your payment is “only” \$622 per month. Ultimately, your \$38,000 car will end up costing you \$44,802, of which \$7,066 is interest. At the end of the loan, that nice, shiny new car you bought 7 years ago is now scratched, faded, and is now worth maybe \$10,000, depending on the make and model.

While we are at it, let me add that the average American spends \$114 per month on cell phone (2018). Further, last year the average American spent \$65 per month on internet. The average American home spent \$55 per month on cable TV.

As an aside, permit me to share a frightening statistic: in 2018 the average American person consumed nearly 4 hours of TV per day, which works out to be 77 days in a year. In a 70-year lifespan, the typical American will spend 14 years, 9 months and 10 days in front of the one eyed blue glowing monster.

Adding up the cell phone, internet, and cable TV bills for a family of four – I did not include monthly charges for streaming services like Netflix, Disney channel, YouTube premium – the average American family will spend \$5,554 in order to amuse ourselves to death.

By contrast, the average American family donated \$2,081 to charity. [Pause.]

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 55% of the people in the US - more than half of our country – spent more than they made in the year. People are enslaving themselves with debt and Jesus wants us to be free – free indeed.

I love our country. But our government has caused us to become the most profligate, indebted nation. Our population represents only 4% of the people on the planet, but our federal debt is 31.3% of all national debt in the world. No one else is even close. This is why it is so important that we as individuals and families do what we can to live by Biblical, and not worldly, principles.

Please do not misunderstand what I am about to say. I am not opposed to people making a lot of money. God blesses people with wealth, and I am genuinely happy for them. I am a convert to Adventism, and I have been amazed to see the generosity of the wealthy – and the middle income, and the poor - within our church. I have friends that have very nice homes and many of them use them as centers for ministry and hospitality. I just want all of us to think about the times in which we live and how we choose to live. According to the Bible, Jesus is coming soon! Amen.

In preparation for this message I was talking with my best friend, Jesus, and he reminded me that He has a message for us living in the last days.

Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:¹⁸ I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

I am proposing that over the course of the next week we individually, and in our families, seriously pray about how we are living, and what we are doing with our time and our finances. I believe that the Bible teaches us that everything we own actually belongs to God, and we would do well to invite him to teach us what it means to be stewards of His possessions.

The COVID pandemic has taught everyone that the global economy is fragile, and that confidence in the financial system is misplaced. There is still a high degree of uncertainty in the world. There are a number of people in my local congregation who have lost their jobs. Jesus wants us to learn to trust Him. In all areas of our lives.

Friends, I have been burdened with this message for some time. Together we have traced through Biblical prophecy and history, and we can clearly see that we are rapidly approaching the time when Jesus will finish His intercession in heaven.

We have seen this from the Bible. We are living in strange times, where the signs of the times described in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 are no longer the exception, but the norm in our daily news cycle. We see that because of the increase of lawlessness the love of many is growing cold. We witness our country changing right before our eyes, and the liberty that birthed our land is daily being torn down like an unwanted statue by both politician and mob alike.

It is time for us to act. Jesus is coming soon. In this one message we have traced over 2,500 years of Biblical prophetic history, from ancient Babylon to modern Babylon,. And now, to bring things to our day, please consider these words, written just over 100 years ago, by a modern-day prophet. Add this event to the timeline of history we have seen today. The title of this testimony is “The Last Crisis.” I confirmed that the title was given by the author in Testimonies, volume 9, page 11. 9... 11.

We are living in the time of the end. The fast-fulfilling signs of the times declare that the coming of Christ is near at hand. The days in which we live are solemn and important. The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude.

The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones. ... [SLIDE]

On one occasion, when in New York City, I was in the night season called upon to behold buildings rising story after story toward heaven. These buildings were warranted to be fireproof, and they were erected to glorify their owners and builders. Higher and still higher these buildings rose, and in them the most costly material was used. Those to whom these buildings belonged were not asking themselves: “How can we best glorify God?” The Lord was not in their thoughts...

The scene that next passed before me was an alarm of fire. Men looked at the lofty and supposedly fire-proof buildings and said: “They are perfectly safe.” But these buildings were consumed as if made of pitch. The fire engines could do nothing to stay the destruction. The firemen were unable to operate the engines. [SLIDE]

Where were you when the towers came down? The freshmen entering University this year were not even born in 2001.

There are not many, even among educators and statesmen, who comprehend the causes that underlie the present state of society. Those who hold the reins of government are not able to solve the problem of moral corruption, poverty, pauperism, and increasing crime. They are struggling in vain to place business operations on a more secure basis. If men would give more heed to the teaching of God's word, they would find a solution of the problems that perplex them. [SLIDE]

God's word to His people is: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, ... and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters." "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18; 1 Peter 2:9. God's people are to be distinguished as a people who serve Him fully, wholeheartedly, taking no honor to themselves, and remembering that by a most solemn covenant they have bound themselves to serve the Lord and Him only. Testimonies for the Church, volume 9, pages 11 -17.

Please take seriously some of the suggestions I made today. Pray and ask God to give you wisdom and courage to take stock of where you are at in your experience with Christ. Jesus is coming soon. May our love and commitment to Christ deepen, and may the attractions of the world be weaned from our souls in anticipation of a far more exceeding glory in His presence.

Let us pray.