

Are We Living in the Last Days - Joel Rosenberg

by From the Pulpit & Classic Sermons

Joel Rosenberg argues that we are living in the last days based on the signs Jesus gave us in Matthew 24.

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Scripture: Ezekiel 39:21, Joel 2:28, Matthew 24:6-7, Matthew 24:12, Matthew 24:14, Matthew 24:32

Topics: "Radio"

Description

In this sermon, Joel Rosenberg discusses the signs of the last days as described by Jesus. He mentions wars, rumors of wars, revolutions, false religions, false messiahs, false prophets, earthquakes, famines, and diseases as signs of the end times. He also talks about the spread of the gospel to all nations and the rebirth of the state of Israel as significant events. Rosenberg emphasizes the importance of living according to the Great Commission and sharing the gospel with others.

Transcript

Welcome to From the Pulpit in Classic Sermons. Each week we bring you a different message from some of history's greatest speakers in the Christian faith. And powerful sermons from modern preachers, too.

This week we have Joel Rosenberg. With his message, Are We Living in the Last Days? Good morning. It's an honor to be with you this morning.

I'm from the East Coast, so you've got to excuse my disbelief that there's anyone up in California this time of morning. But this is nice, and I appreciate you guys coming out. Thank you for what you do here at Calvary Chapel, and for the way you're reaching your community and the world for Christ.

No time like the present. Our topic this morning is, Are We Living in the Last Days? And you just look at the world around you, and you have to ask that question. If you can't send your children to school safely in a one-room Amish schoolhouse, you start wondering what is going on in our country.

You've got North Korea testing a nuclear weapon and ballistic missiles capable of reaching Los Angeles. You've got the president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. I want you to say that five times quickly with me.

No, I'm just kidding. You can just say Ahmed Genocide, because that sort of captures the sense of where he's going. The president of Iran is telling people that he believes the end of the world is rapidly

approaching.

Last year when he was elected, he was telling people in Iran that he believed the end of the world was just two or three years away. And that the way to hasten the coming of the Islamic Messiah, known as the 12th Imam or the Mahdi, the way to hasten his arrival is to launch a global jihad, to annihilate Israel, the little Satan in his view, and the United States, whom he calls the great Satan. And, of course, you know Iran is feverishly trying to build, buy, or steal nuclear weapons, and is building military alliances with three nuclear powers, Russia, China, and North Korea.

You've got the former Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, saying that he believes we are watching the early stages of World War III. You've got Senator John McCain, the Arizona senator widely touted as a possible presidential candidate, saying on Meet the Press a few months ago that if Iran gets nuclear weapons, he believes, quote, I think we could see Armageddon, unquote. Now, Senator McCain is known for a lot of things.

He's known as a war hero. He's known for his straight talk. He's known as a Republican for getting conservatives all mad at him when he does deals with the Democrats and vice versa.

He is not really known for citing the Book of Revelation on national television in terms of foreign policy crises in the Middle East. Yet that's the moment that we're in right now, and it's an intriguing moment. It's a dangerous moment.

It's hard to imagine how we're going to keep the nuclear genie in the bottle in North Korea and Iran. And these two countries are talking about launching what would effectively be World War III. Now, I write novels, and I'm going to tell you a little bit about that this morning.

I write political thrillers. I did have a career in politics for many years, but I kept helping my candidates lose. So I thought, maybe that's not really the career for me.

Maybe I ought to shift and get out of that and just make things up for a living. And I began writing a series of political thrillers. As the pastor mentioned, *The Last Jihad*, *The Last Days*, *The Ezekiel Option*, *The Copper Scroll*.

I've got a new nonfiction book out this week or this month called *Epicenter*, *Why the Current Rumbles in the Middle East Will Change Your Future*. And it talks about these issues. All of these thrillers take you inside these Middle Eastern adventures and what could happen.

And they've had a strange way of coming true, each one of them. And now *Epicenter* takes us nonfictionally into this world. But this is the question.

And since the middle of July, when I started this book tour for *The Copper Scroll*, I've been on over 200 radio and television programs. People interviewing me about what's going on in the Middle East and where is this leading. I was on CNN in August at the height of when Hezbollah was raining 4,000 missiles and rockets down on the citizens of Israel.

And the CNN anchor said, Joel, you know, based on all the horrible things we're seeing in the Middle East, are we living in the last days? I mean, you've written about this, Joel. You wrote a book called *The Last Days*. You speak on this widely.

What are the signs we're supposed to be watching for? And do you think we're there? Now, remember, this is not, you know, this is not Pastor Chuck Smith asking me. This is not your pastor asking me. This is CNN.

They're asking, are we living in the last days? And it's a good question. It's an important question, given all that we're seeing. And we're going to get into that this morning.

We're going to start in Matthew chapter 24. So I want to turn there. And as we do, let me give you a little bit of background of how I got to this topic.

I am an evangelical Christian. As the pastor mentioned, I'm from an Orthodox Jewish background. My Orthodox Jewish grandparents and great-grandparents actually escaped out of Russia around 1907 when the czar was killing thousands upon thousands of Jews.

Basically, you had two options in anti-Semitic, fascist, czarist Russia in 1907. You could fiddle on the roof or you could consider trying to get out. And my family was like, hmm, let's try at least to get out.

Now, obviously, many were unsuccessful. But God, by His grace, got our family out. In fact, they hid in a hay wagon that was crossing a border.

And czarist soldiers plunged their swords into the hay to see if anyone was in there. By God's grace, no one was injured. None of the kids sneezed.

None of the kids said, are we there yet? I got to go to the bathroom. They were able to get out. And having gotten out of fascist, anti-Semitic, czarist Russia, they didn't go, ooh, let's settle in Germany or Poland or Austria.

They worked their way across the continent of Europe. They got to Ellis Island in New York. And like any good Jewish family, they set up shop in Brooklyn, which is where my father was raised.

Now, by God's grace, he and my, and eventually the woman he married, came to know Jesus as the Messiah and helped lead me into the kingdom. And so that's my background. And then, as I mentioned, 11 years in politics, working for a number of U.S. and Israeli political leaders, including Steve Forbes, which was a wonderful time.

I helped him lose two presidential campaigns. That was exciting. And then for former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who, as you know, also lost a campaign not long ago.

So I got into writing novels. I thought, you know, let's just make things up. And I'd never written fiction before, although when I was ghostwriting for Rush Limbaugh in the mid-'90s, some of my liberal friends said I was making things up and writing fiction, but that was different.

So I decided I'm going to write thrillers. I'm going to write a series of thrillers that draw you in on an adventure. And hopefully, when you can't put the novel down, maybe three-quarters of the way into the book, I'm going to raise the spiritual temperature to the point that one of the characters shares the gospel with another.

And I want to take people inside the events in the Middle East. And I want to take them on a series of events that could be leading us, that could cause the characters to wonder, are we living in the last days? So, okay, for my first novel, it was called The Last Jihad. The first page puts you inside the cockpit of a jet

plane that's been hijacked by radical Islamic terrorists.

It's coming in on a kamikaze attack mission into an American city. This is nine months before September 11th. I began writing it in January 2001.

And as the story of *The Last Jihad* unfolds, the fictional American president gets into a global war against radical Islam, and then with a fictional war with Saddam Hussein over terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. I was literally finishing *The Last Jihad* on the morning of September 11th, 2001, in a townhouse that my wife and I and kids were living in at the time, just 15 minutes away from Washington Dulles Airport, where at that moment, Flight 77 was being hijacked, turned around, flown over our house, and into the Pentagon. Now, we didn't ever expect that novel to be published.

A whole series of events ensued in which eventually *The Last Jihad* was published a year later. And I had, you know, no one had ever heard of me. No one had ever heard of *The Last Jihad*.

But suddenly, there was so much interest because this novel was essentially coming true. And I was interviewed on over 160 radio and television shows. And people would say, you know, how is it possible to write a novel that begins with a kamikaze attack against the United States and leads to a war with Iraq? How did you do that? What do you think is happening next? You know, look in your little crystal ball and see where we're going with this thing.

And then we would walk these through and we would talk about these issues. And then they would say, now, your name is Rosenberg, right? I'd say, right. They'd say, that's Jewish, isn't it? Right.

But you've got all these characters in your book. They're all talking about Jesus, aren't they? Right. What is that? What are you, born again? Are you an evangelical Christian? I said, well, yes, I am.

Well, how is that possible? How can you be Jewish and believe in Jesus? So I said, well, actually, it is an interesting story. I mean, you probably don't have time for me to talk about it right now. Well, oh, no.

It's one thing to have a novelist who writes novels that come true on our show. It's another thing to have some Jew who believes in Jesus. I never even heard of that.

Why don't you tell us your story? And in less than 60 days, I was able to talk about my faith in Jesus Christ with over 20 million people. And this just set into motion a series of novels. And the publisher came to me and said, would you like to write another one? And I thought, OK, you know, beats working, right? What else am I going to do? Go help people lose more campaigns? OK.

So that's when I wrote the book *The Last Days*. And that begins with the death of Yasser Arafat, an American president pushing for peace and democracy in the Middle East. And strangely enough, well, 13 months after the book came out, Arafat was dead.

Two months after that, President Bush decided to make democracy in the Middle East the centerpiece of his second term agenda. And what's strange is still was the first pages of *The Last Days* puts you inside a U.S. diplomatic convoy heading into Gaza as part of the peace process when that convoy is suddenly blown up by a massive explosion. Six days before *The Last Days* hit bookstores, a U.S. diplomatic convoy heading into Gaza as part of the peace process was attacked by terrorists.

This is when U.S. News & World Report did a story on me describing me as a modern Nostradamus. Now I'm having to go on all these radio and television shows saying, no, no, no, I'm not a Nostradamus. I'm not a psychic.

I'm not a clairvoyant. I don't call Miss Cleo in the middle of the night to get my plot ideas, OK? I'm an evangelical Christian from an Orthodox Jewish background. I'm basing these novels on a series of... And they said, what did you say? I said, well, I'm basing these series on a very... No, no, no, no, before that.

Did you just say you're Jewish and you believe in Jesus? I said, yes. And so I'm basing these novels on a series of events... No, no, no, no, I happen to be Jewish and believe in Jesus. I said, well, actually, it is an interesting story.

And sure enough, they gave me a chance to talk about my faith in Christ with 15 million people. So this has just set into motion these series of books that they're all based on Bible prophecy. And they're all based on the sense that while we are not going to know the date and time that Jesus comes back, there are clues, there are things to watch for that indicate that we may be getting a lot closer than most people realize.

And so that's most recent. Now, this has happened so many times that now when I'm on CNN, they just say flat out, all right, let's just get right to the prophecies. What are they? And what should we look at? So let's talk about that today.

Matthew chapter 24. You know, Jesus was asked this very question by his disciples at the beginning of Matthew 24. They said to him, when are you coming back? And what are the signs that we should be looking for? What indicates the end of the age, the last days? Now, Jesus could have given a very Don Rumsfeld answer.

No comment. Next question. But he didn't.

He spent an entire chapter walking us through. Now, I would note that at the end of chapter 24, verse 36, Jesus says he's not going to tell us the day and the hour. Matthew 24, 36, he says, but of that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven nor the son, but the father alone.

For the coming of the son of man will be just like the days of Noah. Two thoughts about that. First of all, day and hour is a fairly narrow time frame.

Jesus says, I'm not going to throw the game for you, but I'll let you know when the game's fairly close to beginning. You know, he does give us an entire list of things. We're going to look at that in a moment.

I should also know that for Noah, the days of Noah, he knew what was coming. He knew what was coming. He didn't know exactly when, but he was preparing for it.

He wasn't caught off guard. Yes, by the actual time when rain started falling for the first time in human history. Yes, that was, but not for the concept that it was coming or that he was getting ready for it, preparing for the salvation of his family.

I should also note that I have four sons, my wife and I. We've got Caleb, Jacob, who is here with us today, and Jonah. Those are the first three. Then we have Noah.

Now, the first are 12, 10, 8, and Noah is 2. And just to explain this, you know, Jesus said he's not coming back again until the days of Noah. So we thought, you know, if we're holding him back in any way, you know, but now he's, Noah's here and we're good to go. And Noah's even been to Israel already.

And so we're, we're all set. So just know that we're living in the days of Noah now. Now, Jesus, when he walks us through this, he says, look, here's what you're going to be looking for.

Wars, rumors of wars, revolutions, the rise of false religions, false messiahs, false prophets. He talks about earthquakes and famines and terrible diseases that are spreading across the earth. He talks about lawlessness increasing, the love of many growing cold.

He talks about this gospel of the kingdom spreading to every people, tribe, and tongue and the face of the planet. He talks about the rebirth of the state of Israel. In fact, he says in verse 32, now learn the parable from the fig tree.

When its branch has already become tender and it put forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So too, when you see all these things, recognize that he is near right at the door. What is the parable of the fig tree? Well, I would encourage you in your, in your quiet times, your Bible studies this week to spend some time in Jeremiah chapter 24.

This is where we learn of the parable of the fig tree. God sets down in front of the Hebrew prophet Jeremiah, two baskets of figs. One basket has good figs and he's, and God is clear.

These represent the children of Israel, the Jewish people, the good ones that are following me. The second basket, these are bad figs. They represent the, also the children of Israel, also Jewish people, but these are people who are not following me.

Ergo, both baskets are the Jewish people. They're the people, the children of Israel. Some are following, some aren't.

They're both figs in the parable of the fig tree. And we see this throughout the Bible, Micah chapter 4, verses 1 through 4. Also, God says that in the last days, all the attention of the world will be focused back on Israel. And every child of Israel will be sitting under his fig tree.

The parable of the fig tree, as Jesus is saying here, is when you see all these things, wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, persecution of the believers, the spread of the gospel, all these issues, and you see the rebirth of the state of Israel, now you know you're in the ballgame. Now you know it's getting close, as Jesus said. So too, when you see all these things, recognize that he is near, right at the door.

And we have seen these things. And interestingly enough, the famous chapters where we read those prophecies, detailing that Israel will be reborn in the last days, and the Jews will return to the Holy Land after centuries of exile, and that the ancient ruins will be rebuilt, and the deserts will bloom, all these prophecies are detailed in Ezekiel, chapters 36 and 37. And guess what? They've all come true in our lifetime.

We have seen the rebirth of Israel in our lifetime. We have seen Jews pour back into the Holy Land after centuries of exile. We've seen the deserts bloom and the ancient ruins be rebuilt.

Go to Israel with your pastoral team, go and see Jerusalem rebuilt, and Bethlehem, and Jericho, and Tiberias, and Nazareth. These cities have been rebuilt. You can see them for yourselves.

It's extraordinary, and it's so easy for us to forget. When we turn on the news and we see a country attacking Israel, or like in the case of Akhmedijad, saying we're going to wipe Israel off the map, the fact that there is an Israel today is a huge, major Bible prophecy come true in our lifetime. What's interesting, though, is the two chapters that follow, Ezekiel 36 and 37.

And turn with me there for a moment. We're going to really hunker down here in the time that we have. It gives you a flavor of this remarkable prophecy, what's known to Bible scholars as the war of Gog and Magog.

And so, as you're turning there, let me say that my answer to the CNN correspondent, as well as to all the other reporters, and producers, and hosts that I've talked to is, yes, we are living in the last days. Look at the list that Jesus gave us, and you see that you can basically check off all these things. So I was on, some of you may know who Alan Combs is.

He's the co-host of Hannity and Combs on the Fox network. And Alan is Jewish, and so am I. I'm a follower of Jesus, of course, and as you've heard, my politics have been, and they still are, but I tell people I've gone through political detox now. I'm not doing the partisan thing.

But I am from, you know, I'm a conservative Republican. He's obviously a liberal Democrat. So he invites me on his radio show, separate from the TV show.

And so he has me on, why? To mock me about this whole thing about the last days. Everyone was talking about it. Fox, CNN, MSNBC, we're all talking about it.

And so he had me on, and he said, all right, Joel, when's Jesus coming back? I said, well, I can't tell you exactly, but let's look at the signs. He said, no, no, no, no, no. I want to know exactly.

I want to know. You come on. You have an inkling.

You're the modern Nostradamus. Come on. Give me a sense.

Just give me a hint. I said, you know, I can't tell you. It might be a lot closer than you think, Alan, but I don't know for sure.

Oh, come on. Should I buy green bananas? He said, should I go get my laundry from the cleaners? I mean, you know, how soon is it? I said, I can't tell you that with that level of precision. Oh, come on.

He's pushing. Come on. Should I get those green bananas? I mean, what should I do, Joel? I said, Alan, you really want to know? Yeah.

What should I do? I said, Alan, you need to come to know Jesus as the Messiah. That's what you need to do. Well, his reaction wasn't quite so similar.

He kind of pulled back and he said, what? You're trying to convert me to Jesus on my own radio show? I said, I didn't ask you to come on here and try to convert me to Jesus. I said, you asked me, Alan. You said, how soon is he coming? What should I do? Should I buy green bananas? Should I get my dry cleaning today? Joel, what should I do? And I responded to you.

You should know Jesus as the Messiah. He goes, all right, well, you did say that. So this is that tension, though.

We don't know exactly, but we know we're a lot closer than ever before. And we also have to take what Jesus shared with us and put it into context of other scriptures to get a feel for what else is coming. Ezekiel 38.

This is where God begins to describe a major apocalyptic Middle Eastern war. It precedes the War of Armageddon. But this is what's called the War of Gog and Magog.

Let's take a look at a few key verses. And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, set your face against Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshach, and Tubal, and prophesy against him. And say, Thus says the Lord God.

Behold, I'm against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshach, and Tubal. And you're like, all right, I'm lost already. Okay, I understand.

Let's start with Gog. You're like, I'm a Gog already. I don't know what you're talking about.

Okay, Gog is not a name. Gog is a title, like a pharaoh or a czar. It's a ruler.

He's a prince. He's a political leader of a certain territory. The territory is Magog.

You're like, right, I still don't, you know, yeah, that's not helping me. Okay. The ancient historian Josephus, Aphraeus Josephus, writing in the first century, he describes that this people group of Magog are the people whom the Greeks at the time called the Scythians.

Now, if you do the research, and I detail all this in this new book, Epicenter, to kind of walk you through this. But the short version is the Scythian people are the Magogites. And the Scythian peoples, as you kind of do this historical detective work and figure this out, is they're the people that settled north of the Black Sea in what we now call Russia and the former Soviet Union.

And as you go through these scriptures, you'll find that Magog is described, and this coalition is coming from the uttermost parts of the north, the furthestmost parts of the north. The scriptures are clear. And if you, if I had a map and I pulled it down and I said, here's Israel, go due north and find what's the country to the uttermost parts of the north before you hit, you know, the North Pole, Russia.

Now, what's interesting is the first country that's identified as an ally of Russia is in verse 5. The first country, Persia. Now, Persia is an easy one to identify because until 1935, that was the official legal name of Iran. So, according to the scriptures, we're looking for a Russian-Iranian military alliance to begin to form.

With who else? Well, some of your Bibles will say Ethiopia. Others will say Kush. This is the upper Nile region.

And so it's definitely Ethiopia, but it's also the country of Sudan. Interestingly enough, Sudan is a radical Muslim country with very close strategic ties to Iran. There's a genocide that has been underway in Sudan in recent years in which the Muslims are killing Christians by the millions.

Over 2 million people have died in Sudan through this genocide. Muslims have died as well, but this is a horrifying situation, and it's all tied between the radical Muslim ties between Iran and Sudan. Interesting, particularly in light of these passages.

The next country is Put. Where do we put Put? Well, Josephus, writing in the first century, said that Put is ancient Libyos, what we would now call Libya. Now, ancient Libya was a larger territory than what we now call Libya.

So we're probably also talking about Algeria, maybe Tunisia. Now, this is interesting because who was in Algeria, for example, in the early part of 2006? Well, that would be Russian President Vladimir Putin, who signed a \$7.5 billion arms deal with Algeria, the largest arms deal that has been signed by Moscow since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Earlier this summer, Putin sent the deputy speaker of the Russian parliament to Libya.

Why? To start discussions on a new arms deal, a new strategic pact between Moscow and Libya for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The next country is Gomer. Now, I have to tell my children, Gomer is not where Gomer Pyle is from, okay? We do our historic detective work and we find out that Gomer is modern-day Turkey.

And now, some Bible scholars believe that the Gomerites also spread northward, perhaps into Germany and Austria. There's some disagreement about that, but there's a consensus that Gomer itself is the country of Turkey. Beth Togarmah, this is the Turkic-speaking peoples that spread out across Turkey to Armenia, Turkmenistan, and all the stands of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan.

And so what you're watching here is Russia with a group of Muslim countries that are going to attack Israel in the last days. Verse 8, after many days you will be summoned, in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste. And verse 9, you will go up, you will come like a storm, you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your troops and the many peoples with you.

Now, the mountains of Israel that this coalition has converged against, the mountains of Israel are to the north of Israel, along the border of Lebanon and Syria and northern Jordan. Now, we don't know for sure if this war of Gog and Magog will mean that Lebanon and Syria and possibly Jordan will be active participants in the war against Israel, but we know that these other forces will be coming through those territories. And of course, as we look at what's happened just over the last few months, if this war were to happen in our lifetime, it's not unfathomable.

So imagine Lebanon and Syria primarily being active participants in this war to destroy Israel. Now, let me say for a moment, and just be clear, I can't tell you that this set of prophecies, which, by the way, in verse 16, Ezekiel says this will all happen in the last days. We don't know if it's going to happen before the rapture or after, but we know it happens after Ezekiel 36 and 37, the rebirth of Israel.

And I can't tell you if these things are about to happen right now or even are going to happen in our lifetime. But it's interesting. The trajectory of events are fascinating.

You may be interested to know that Russia has just sent military troops into Lebanon to assist with this UN peacekeeping force that's supposed to protect Israel. But let me say that Russia has not had boots on the ground in Lebanon in over 220 years. Now they do.

Turkey just sent over 1,000 troops, military troops, into Lebanon to be part of the peacekeepers. The Turks have not had military troops in Lebanon since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire almost 100 years ago, but now they do. Now, again, we don't know for sure exactly what's going to happen.

God could kick the can of this prophecy up the road for decades if he wanted to, but what if he doesn't? We're beginning to watch Russia and Iran form a military alliance for the first time in 2,500 years since the prophecy was written. Russia never had an alliance with them, but in December they signed a \$1 billion arms deal with Iran. Russia is building nuclear facilities in Iran.

Russia has trained over 1,000 nuclear scientists. They're in Iran. Russia's running political interference for Iran at the United Nations to prevent them from being stopped from getting nuclear weapons.

This is the moment we're in. Now what's interesting is you, and I would encourage you to spend time studying these scriptures. What you'll find as you go through this is nobody comes to Israel's aid.

Not the UN, not the EU, not the United States. Israel is all alone in this war except one. One comes to Israel's aid, and that is the God of Israel.

A supernatural description of events unfolds in verse 18, and when you read that and spend some time studying it for yourself, you're going to see fire falling from heaven, a massive earthquake, diseases spreading through the troops of Russia and her allies. And in chapter 39, we find out it takes seven months to bury all the bodies as God completely obliterates all the enemies of Israel in a single day. This is going to be the day of the greatest horror, greatest tragedy in human history.

Not since Charlton Heston stared down Newell Brenner in the Ten Commandments have we seen fire falling from heaven and plagues attacking the enemies of Israel. The Bible says this is going to happen, and it could happen in our lifetime, but that's not all. As you go through this, you're going to find that God says very clearly, chapter 39, verse 21, And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations will see my judgment which I have executed, and my hand which I have laid upon them.

Later, he talks about pouring out the spirit on the people of Israel in the Middle East. I believe this is not only going to be the day of greatest judgment in human history, a day of great sorrow and tragedy, I also believe that we are going to see the greatest spiritual awakening come out of this. As the whole world sees on global satellite television, I suspect, the hand of God defend his people.

And when he pours out his spirit and people see God's glory, I believe millions of people are going to come to Christ. Millions and millions of people around the world, perhaps tens of millions or more. We don't know for sure, we do know for sure not everyone's going to come to Christ.

Judas spent three years with Jesus, didn't make a dent. But many will see God's glory, and the Holy Spirit will be poured out on them, and their lives will be changed. And as we close this morning, this is just scratching the surface, I realize this.

And I'm just trying to give you a sense of how to put a little bit of what's going on in the world into some context. Again, as I said, my new book, Epicenter, walks us through in detail. And a novel that I wrote called The Ezekiel Option takes this fictionally and says, what would it look like if these things were to happen? But I want to close with this point this morning.

The answer is, the question is, so what? So what if these events are coming? So what if we're living in the last days? What does this mean to me? And I would encourage you, those of you that are here this morning and are followers of Jesus Christ, you look at all the things that are going on in our world, you look at all these signs that are being fulfilled in the Scripture that suggest that we are in the last days. If you're planning any major sins, can I encourage you to sort of postpone those or maybe cancel those outright? This is not a good time to be goofing around. This is not a good time to be far from the will of God.

Not when you know all these events are converging at this moment. Some of them we don't know yet, but some of them we know for sure. Which means Jesus could come at any moment.

Nothing else has to happen prophetically before Jesus takes us away in the rapture. The war of God and mad God could happen after the rapture. And the question I have for you this morning is a question I ask for myself.

When I see Jesus face to face one day, do I want to be ashamed of what I'm doing? The way I live, the way I work, the way I treat my family, the way I treat my friends. As well, do I want to stand before Jesus one day and have him say, Joel, I'm really glad the whole thing with the novels worked out. But what about the Great Commission? How come you weren't sharing the gospel with every single person that moved? How come you didn't take the gospel around America? How come you didn't take the gospel to the nations of the epicenter? What part of the Great Commission go you there for and make disciples of all nations? What part of that did you not understand, son? I mean, was it in Greek? All right.

Well, actually, it was in Greek. But, you know, you had all those translations. I don't want to be ashamed when Jesus sees me.

And I don't think you do either. And this compels us to ask ourselves, how are we living? How can we get on the right track with the Lord? Ask him to forgive our sins and move on and start getting engaged in a holy life. In a life of reaching our neighbors and reaching the epicenter.

The nations that are going to face the judgment at some point. How are we going to reach these nations for Jesus? And if you're here this morning and you've never made that decision to receive Jesus Christ today. You're in a good church.

And there's a pastoral staff that wants to walk you through that decision. I'd be happy to chat with you myself outside. Let us explain to you how to make that decision.

How to receive Christ as your Savior. I don't want you to stand before me one day before judgment and say, I didn't know what I was supposed to do. Walk out there, talk to me or one of the pastors, one of the elders, one of the staff.

Let us walk you through and just share with you how to make a decision to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior. We don't know how much more time we have. But I can tell you without a shadow of a doubt, we are living in the last days.

And it means something. It means something. It means we need to live a holy life and a life with the assurance that we are going to heaven.

That we will not be left behind. That we will not be spending eternity in hell. This is the moment.

As God is telling us, I don't want you to be surprised. I'm not going to throw the game. I'm not going to give you the day or the hour.

But you see these signs. How are you going to live? Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for this time.

We praise you and lift up your name this morning. This is just a little bit of a survey, a brief taste of some of these verses and what they mean and how they impact our lives. But I pray you would be stirring in the hearts of every person here this morning.

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