

The Return of Jesus Christ to Earth

by Oswald J. Smith

The world is getting worse, and Jesus Christ will return after the church is completed to rebuild the tabernacle of David and establish his reign.

Duration: 39:27

Scripture: Luke 21:24, Acts 15:14

Topics: "Second Coming Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that the world is becoming increasingly evil and corrupt as we approach the end times. He refers to Acts 15:14-18 as the most important prophetic passage in the Bible, which describes the last days of our dispensation. The preacher argues that according to God's word, things are supposed to get worse and worse, not better and better. He highlights the prevalence of evil, seduction, violence, brutality, and substance addiction in today's society, comparing it to the past when such issues were less common.

Transcript

I wonder if I might first of all give you my subject for next Wednesday evening, the Lord willing. I'm going to speak on the subject, The Future of the World in the Light of Prophecy. The future of the world, not of the church.

The future of the world in the light of prophecy. And we'll bring the prophetic portions of God's word to bear on this subject, the Lord willing, next Sunday evening. Now this next Wednesday evening, now this evening I want to speak on this subject as I commence this prophetic series, The Return of Christ to Earth, The Only Hope of the World.

Let me say that this message that I'm going to deliver tonight is in my book, Prophecy, What Lies Ahead. And if at the close of the service you would like to take the message home with you, you may get a copy at the close of the meeting tonight, and you may quietly read what I'll try to say in the message of this evening. Prophecy, What Lies Ahead, it's on the bookstand, and you may get it, the Lord willing, at the close of tonight's service.

Now this evening, The Return of Christ to Earth, The Only Hope of the World. There are two words that I must say a word about in this subject before I get to the subject itself. The first word is the word earth, the return of Christ to earth.

I am not going to talk tonight about the return of Christ to the air. I'm not going to speak anything tonight about the rapture of the saints. I'm going to talk tonight about the time when Jesus Christ will return not just to the air in order to rapture the saints, but when he'll return to the earth to establish his millennial kingdom.

So my subject tonight is this, The Return of Christ to Earth, The Only Hope of the World. Now I must say just a word about that last word, the word world. I am not saying the only hope of the Church.

I want you to bear that in mind. I have not announced my subject as the only hope of the Church. I have announced my subject as the only hope of the world, the entire world.

And so the subject is this, The Return of Christ to Earth, when he comes all the way back to earth, the only hope of the world. That's the subject for tonight. Now there are two statements that I want to leave with you before I get into the heart of the subject, because if you will remember these two statements, I think you'll be guided regarding the entire message.

This is the first statement. Things are going to go from bad to worse until the reign of the Antichrist. That's the first statement.

Things are going to go from bad to worse until the reign of the Antichrist. When I was a young minister, many, many years ago now as I commenced my ministry for the Lord Jesus Christ, everybody was talking about the fact that the world was improving. The world was getting better, better and better and better.

I heard that on every side. Every minister, almost every minister was proclaiming that message. We're improving.

We're making progress. We're getting better. It will not be long now until we'll find ourselves in the millennium, because we're improving from day to day.

Today I hardly ever hear that note sounded. Very, very few people would ever say today, the world is getting better. We realize that that is not true.

The world has not been getting better during the 50 years of my ministry. The world has been getting worse and worse and worse. And so this is my first statement.

Things are going to go from bad to worse until the reign of the Antichrist. Now there's just one passage of Scripture that will substantiate that statement without turning to any other. And this one passage of Scripture is found in 2nd Timothy, the 3rd chapter, the first five verses, and then the 13th verse.

Now I do not know how many of you have your Bibles with you tonight. I hope that most of you have. And I would be so glad if you would turn with me to 2nd Timothy, the 3rd chapter, the first five verses, and then the 13th verse, so that you can remember the passage upon which I'm basing my statement that things are going to go from bad to worse until the reign of the Antichrist.

Now if you know that, you'll not be surprised. If you know that, you'll not be disappointed. If you know that, then you'll not sorrow as those who have no hope.

You'll know that God's word is being fulfilled right to the letter. Things are going to go from bad to worse until the reign of the Antichrist. Well, let's look at this passage, 2nd Timothy, the 3rd chapter, the first five verses.

I'm not going to take time to preach on it. I'm not going to take time to expound it. I'm just going to read it.

And here it is. This know also. This isn't something that we hope or guess.

It's something that we know. This know also that in the last days, the last days, that's the end of the age, the end of this dispensation, the last days. This know also that in the last days, perilous times shall come, not safe times, dangerous times.

Perilous times shall come. Now, here's a description of the last days. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents.

Note that for a moment, if you will. Disobedient to parents. I need not say a word about that.

You know that it's true in this our day and generation. Disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traity, petty, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Having a form of God, going to church, professing to be Christians, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

From such, turn away. Now, there's a description in detail of the last days of our dispensation. There isn't anyone in the world, and I've said this for 50 years now, and I still say it, there isn't anyone in the world who can say for one single moment in the light of this passage that things are supposed to get better and better because according to God's word, things are supposed to get worse and worse as we get to the end time days.

Look at the 13th verse, if you will. But evil men and seducers shall wax better and better. No, evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

So there you have my first fundamental statement. Things are going to go from bad to worse until the reign of the Antichrist. So don't be surprised because things are getting worse.

That's exactly what God said would happen 1900 years ago. He said they would go from bad to worse until the reign of the Antichrist. Now, this is my second statement, and this second statement is of paramount importance.

Here it is. The world will not be converted during this dispensation. The world will not be converted during this dispensation.

You know that when I was a comparatively young minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, there was scarcely a pulpit anywhere in the country that proclaimed that. I went to church after church, I listened to preacher after preacher, and almost every minister said very, very definitely that the world would be converted. The world would be converted in this dispensation and that we would have the millennium.

I heard that on every side. I haven't heard it now for years. I think the average minister realizes today in view of two great wars and other wars as well and the immorality of our day and generation, I think everyone realizes that things are going from bad to worse.

Let me give you, if I may, just putting them two by two as briefly as I can, let me give you a statement of 16, 16 different things that are taking place today in our generation, our civilization, that show that things are going from bad to worse and will continue to go from bad to worse until the reign of the Antichrist. First, lawlessness and crime. Do I have to say anything about that? Lawlessness and crime, infinitely worse

today than it has ever been before.

Second, corruption and immorality. Think of the corruption, think of the immorality of our day and generation. There was nothing like it 50 years ago and now it's everywhere.

Third, violence and brutality. Violence and brutality. We never read in our newspapers about the brutality that we're reading about today, about the violence that we're reading about today.

Violence and brutality. Fourth, drunkenness and dope addiction. And that's worse today than it's ever been before.

When I was in the younger days of my ministry, I hardly ever heard of an addiction of any kind whatever. I never heard of such a thing. I never read of such a thing.

When I was in my 20s, I never read or heard anything about dope addiction. And now today it's everywhere. And I need not say a word about it.

Fifth, war and bloodshed. Think of the wars since I've lived. I lived through the South African War.

I don't know how many of you lived through the South African War. I'll never forget it. I'll never forget the South African War, when young men from Canada left for the front in South Africa.

And then following that, the First Great World War. I lived right through it. I'll never forget it.

Then the Second World War. I lived through that. I'll never forget that.

And since then, we've had the Korean War. And we've had the Vietnam War. We've had other wars in different parts of the world.

And so I say, war and bloodshed. And then sixth, divorce and abortions. Do you know we hardly ever heard about an abortion 50 years ago? Such a thing was hardly ever mentioned.

We hardly ever read about it in the newspapers. And yet today, we're reading continually about divorce. And when I was a young man, I never heard of a divorce anywhere in my community.

Never heard of one single divorce anywhere in my entire community. What a change in this our day and generation. Divorce and abortions.

I never heard about them in the early days of my ministry. And then seventh, racial strife and riots on every side increasing. And last of all, apostasy and unbelief.

Now here are 16 things that characterize the day, the dispensation, the generation in which you and I are now living. And they have become infinitely worse than they have ever been before. Then my second great statement for tonight.

The world, I say, will not be converted during this dispensation. That is not what ministers believed 50 years ago. 50 years ago, the average minister believed that the church was going to succeed in bringing the world to the feet of Jesus in the conversion of the world.

Hardly any minister talks like that today. I remember I preached against it nearly 50 years ago. I stated again and again from a pulpit in my prophetic messages that the world was not going to be converted in

this dispensation.

But very, very few agreed with me in those early days. And yet today, I think almost anyone can realize that our world is not being converted. There are just two parables that bear this out.

One is the parable of the wheat and the tares. The tares remain in the field to the very end of this dispensation. The tares never become wheat.

The tares, representing the children of Satan, they're here right to the end of the age. And that's what Jesus said would happen when he told this parable 1,900 years ago. Then the parable of the dragnet, another of our Lord's parables.

He told us that there would be good fish and bad fish in the net. And it was not only in the sea, the good fish and the bad fish, but even in the church itself, both good fish and bad fish. And it wasn't until the end of the age that they drew the net ashore and counted the bad fish and counted the good fish.

And there were more bad fish than there were good fish. And that's exactly a picture of the end of this dispensation. Of course, I do not have to preach on that anymore.

I don't have to tell you that there are more heathen in Toronto today, over and over again, than there ever were in the history of this city. There are more heathen in Canada today than there ever have been before. There are more heathen in the world today than ever before.

And as we get to the end of the age, there will be more heathen in the entire world than ever before in the world's history. Well, now, let's get down to the message. Let's get down to Acts, the 15th chapter, and the 14th to 18th verse.

This is the most important, the most important prophetic passage in the entire Bible. You will search the Bible in vain to find a more important prophetic passage than this passage in Acts, the 15th chapter, verses 14 to 18. Let's look at it together.

It's a very, very important statement. There are four Acts in this passage, four different Acts. You ought to differentiate them, the one from the other.

They should stand out prominently before you. Follow me, if you will, in your Bibles now, as we look at these verses, Acts, the 15th chapter, verse 14. God is the first.

Doesn't say it's the second, doesn't say afterward. It says at the beginning, it's the first, did visit the Gentiles, not the Jews now. Not the Jews now, we're getting away from the Jews.

First part of Acts had to do with the Jews. Now the apostle Paul has been converted, and now we're turning to the Gentile nations of the world. God is the first, did visit the Gentiles.

What's the meaning of the first? First does not, I say, mean second. Paul the apostle became the great apostle of the Gentile nations of the world. But Paul was not chosen to bring the gospel to the Gentiles, first of all.

Peter was chosen. And you remember Cornelius. Cornelius saw a vision.

He was a Gentile. He was told to send for Peter. He sent for Peter.

Peter came, and Cornelius and his household heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the very first Gentile to be converted, Cornelius and his household. And when Luke writes in the Acts, in the 14th verse here, he says, God is the first, did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

Now here's the first act in the drama. God sent Peter to give the gospels of the Gentiles, the very beginning of this dispensation, after many thousands of Jews had been saved. Peter was the one chosen.

Then later on, Paul took over the ministry and carried on the work among the Gentiles. God is the first, did visit the Gentiles, what for? To save them all, to convert them all, to evangelize them all. That is in what it says.

It says to take out of them, and it means there to take out from among them, a people for his name, the church, the church. And God sent Peter, and then he sent Paul. And they went to the Gentiles and called out from among the Gentiles a people for his name, the church.

Now, most of you tonight are Gentiles. I suppose there are very few, if any, Jews here in this congregation this evening. Most of us are Gentiles.

If it hadn't been that God decided to call Peter and then Paul to go with the gospel of the Gentile nations of the world, you and I would not be Christians tonight. You and I would not be on our way to heaven. You and I would not be saved.

The Jews alone, chosen by God, would have been saved. But God chose Peter and then chose Paul to take the gospel to the Gentile nations of the world in order that they, too, might be saved and form what is called in the New Testament the church. And that's why we have a church today, because God chose from among the Gentiles a people for his name.

Now, the second act in the drama, 16th verse, after this, after what? After the calling out of the Ecclesia, after the calling out of the church, after the visitation of the Gentiles, after this, after the completion of the church, and the church hasn't been completed yet, therefore this cannot happen now until it has been completed. If it should be completed tonight, then this could happen tonight. But not until it's completed can this prediction be fulfilled.

After this, after the calling out of the Ecclesia, after the calling out of the church, after the completion of the church, after this, I will return. Now, James is quoting here directly from the Old Testament scriptures, and he is speaking on behalf of Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ says in this statement, I, a person, will, a promise, re, come back again, return.

This is his promise, not before the completion of the church, but directly after the completion of the church. After this, I will return. I'll come back.

Thank God Jesus Christ is coming back again. He hasn't gone forever. He hasn't left us for good.

One of these days, he's going to break through the skies, and millennial splendor, power, and glory, he's going to return to this world of ours after the church has been gathered out, after the church has been completed. You say, when will that be? I don't know. I have no idea.

I believe we are very close, very close to the completion of the church. How many are going to be in the church? How many millions? How many billions? I don't know. These facts are not given in God's word.

I only know that when the number has been completed and the church has been called out, the next act in the drama will be the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ. After this, I will return. Now, here's the third act in the drama.

What's he going to do when he gets back? What's he going to do when he returns? What will he do first of all? Note what it says in the 16th verse. And we'll build again. We'll build once more the tabernacle of the throne of David, King David, which has fallen down.

And I will build again the ruins thereof. And I will set it up. What's he going to do when he comes back? He's going to turn to his own chosen people once again, the people of David, the Jews.

He's going to turn back to them once more. He's going to rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen down. Do you know that there's been no king on David's throne for centuries now? Centuries have come and centuries have gone.

And no king has reigned on David's throne. And there never will be another king on David's throne until the rightful king returns. And the rightful king is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's the only legal successor to David's throne. God has promised that David would have a successor who would occupy his throne. That successor has not come yet.

When he came the first time, he was rejected. When he comes the second time, he'll be accepted. And he'll reign in millennial splendor and power and glory on David's throne.

We're going to have a king again. That king will be King Jesus, the Messiah, who will come back to reign on David's throne and reign for a thousand years. That's the third act in the drama.

The second act, I will return. The third act, I'll build again the tabernacle or the throne of David which has fallen down. And I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up.

You note, if you will, the word I, the pronoun I. He doesn't say the Church will do it. He doesn't say the Church can do it. He's the only one who can do it.

No one else can ever restore the throne, the Davidic throne. Jesus alone can accomplish that. And so he uses the personal pronoun again and again.

I will return. I will build again the throne of David. I will set it up.

I'm the one who will do it. Jesus Christ is the only one who can do it. And there'll be no restoration so far as the Jews are concerned, so far as Israel's concerned, until Jesus Christ brings about that restoration.

Now the last act in the drama, 17th verse. That the residue of men, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles. Now he's turning to the Gentiles.

He's been dealing with the Jews. He has established his reign on the throne of David, and he's going to reign for a thousand years. Now he turns to the Gentiles.

And in the 17th verse, the rest of men, the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. So the fourth act in the drama has to do with the Gentiles, when he turns to them, and when he saves them, and establishes his millennial kingdom throughout the length and breadth of the

world. Now there are one or two things I've got to say in this connection.

First of all, I've got to turn to the gospel according to Luke, to the most important verse, the most important prophetic verse in the entire gospel. The 21st chapter of Luke's gospel, the 24th verse. Be sure to make a note of it so that you'll never forget it.

It's of tremendous importance. Luke chapter 21, verse 24. This is what it says.

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword. He's speaking now about the Jews. And shall be led away captive into all nations.

That's all been fulfilled. Every word of that has been fulfilled. They shall fall by the edge of a sword.

How many fell under Hitler? Six million. Six million of them fell under Hitler. And they have been falling by the sword for nearly two thousand years.

For the remaining portion of Dr. Smith's sermon, please turn this tape over. Six million of them fell under Hitler. And they have been falling by the sword for nearly two thousand years.

And that's exactly the prediction. That's what Jesus said. They shall fall by the edge of the sword.

What a calamity. And shall be led away captive into all nations. Now that's been fulfilled.

It seems to me that you ought to believe the word of God because of the fulfillment of that one statement, if for nothing else. How did Jesus know that the Jews were going to fall by the edge of the sword in millions and that others were going to be led captive to many nations? Can you tell me any nation where there are no Jews? Can you mention any nation? Can you think of any nation? Is there any nation anywhere in the world where no Jews are to be found? According to the word of God, they are to be scattered among all the nations of the world. And that's happened already.

Now again, and Jerusalem, the city of Jerusalem, shall be trodden down of the Gentiles. The Jews were to be excluded. The Gentiles were to take over.

And the Gentiles have been in power and in control in Jerusalem until recently for nearly 2,000 years. And in spite of everything that has been done to recapture Jerusalem, it has been held by the Gentiles for nearly 2,000 years. Trodden down of the Gentiles until the most important word in this verse is the word until.

I've got the underline. Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Is Jerusalem going to be trodden down forever? No! Only until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

And the very moment, the very year that the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, Jerusalem will never again be trodden down by the Gentile nations until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Now then, let me point out that Jerusalem is no longer trodden down by the Gentiles. In 1967, in the Great War, the Jews won a victory that enabled them to take over the whole of the city of Jerusalem, take control of their entire city, and for these last seven years, in your lifetime and my lifetime, the Jews have been in control of the city of Jerusalem.

For the first time in the history, 2,500 years. Think of it now, the wonder of it. For 2,500 years, the Gentiles have controlled Jerusalem.

Now the Jews control Jerusalem. When you say, doesn't that mean that the end has come? It looks like it. But the Jews could lose Jerusalem again.

It could again be taken over by the Gentiles. But if they succeed in holding it, and if they do not lose it again, then this may be the fulfillment of this prediction. For when this prediction will have been fulfilled, the Jews will be in total control of the city of Jerusalem, and the Gentiles will have been driven out.

The Jews will be there. In 1967, Jerusalem ceased to be trodden down of the Gentile nations. And that happened for the first time in 2,500 years.

I'm just watching now to see whether or not they'll ever be driven out again. For if they're not driven out again, if they continue to control Jerusalem, then I think we have a very definite sign of the end of this dispensation. And prophetic events will be fulfilled right before our eyes in the very near future.

Don't forget that verse. Now the second thing I want to say in this connection is this. When the apostles were saying farewell to their Lord, and he was about to ascend back into heaven from the Mount of Olives, they asked him one question that had been bothering them terribly, a question to which they had not had an answer.

And this was the last question they ever asked our Lord, this question, Will thou at this time, at this time, restore, restore the kingdom to Israel? That was the question in their minds. The kingdom once belonged to Israel. They thought the Messiah had come to restore it.

And so they asked him the question, Lord, has the time come? Will thou now, will thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? What is his answer? His answer was, that's one thing that you are not permitted to know. Even I do not know the answer now that I'm here upon earth. There's only one who knows, my Father in heaven.

Not even the angels, they don't know the answer. Only my Father knows, God knows. That was his answer.

One question that he refused to answer because he said only the Father knew the answer. As to the time the kingdom would be restored to Israel. But did he mock them? Did he laugh at them? Did he say there should be no restoration? The kingdom will never be restored? You'll never control Jerusalem again? You'll never get back to your own country? Did he say that? No, not for one single moment.

What he said was, it'll be restored all right, you'll get back to your own country. The kingdom will be restored to you, but you're not to know the time. And that's why I cannot tell you the time tonight.

I don't know the time. Nobody knows the time. But we know it's going to be restored.

We do not know when. What does that mean? It means that according to God's word, there will be a golden age. I believe it.

There will be a golden age. Swords will be beaten into plowshares. We'll be through with swords.

Nations shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore. There's going to come an end to war.

Neither shall they learn war anymore. In other words, there's going to come a day when the kingdom, in all its glory, will be ushered in, but not by the church, by Jesus himself. When he returns to reign for a thousand years, he'll restore the kingdom to Israel.

And it will last for a thousand years, according to God's word, book of Revelation, but he's the one who will do it. How does that apply to us? If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. That's the promise to the Christians of this dispensation, the church.

If we go without the camp with him, if we forsake the world with him, if we are willing to be persecuted with him, to be martyred, if necessary, if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. And during the millennial reign of Christ, you and I, if we have suffered with him during this dispensation, we'll have the privilege of reigning with him during that glorious millennial reign of his. Where we'll be, I don't know.

How we'll reign, I can't tell you. All I know is that he says if we suffer with him, we'll also reign with him. Do you think, in view of that, I would want to mix with the world? Do you think I would want to go out and associate in the things that the world is doing today? Do you think just because there are more people in the world than there are in the church that I'd want to be with the majority? Not for a moment.

I never wanted that, never since I've become a Christian. I want to stay with the minority. I want to stay with the church.

I do not want to stay in the world. I want to give myself completely to the Lord and to his work and to his service because hereafter I want to reign with the Lord Jesus Christ. He says if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.

And shall we bow together in prayer?

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