

Daniel's 70th Week, 1

Last Things

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Turn with me in your Bibles, if you would, to Daniel 9 and we'll begin reading at verse 1. That's page 1,387. "In the first year of Darius, son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed."

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

May we pray.

Lord, as we look at this passage of Scripture, we pray that you would bring it home to us on this last Sunday in May in the year 2022, following terrible things happening, you would apply this Scripture to our hearts that we may both receive comfort and encouragement and a strong provocation to do the one thing that we can do. For Jesus' sake we pray. Amen.

This is a fascinating passage of scripture, and it was natural to move from "My Sister's Divorce" last week—that was the title of last week's sermon, because it was the last of the sermons in Jeremiah 3, where God had divorced Israel, the northern kingdom, and issued her a certificate of divorce, and he's directing these words to Judah.

So, Jeremiah's prophecy is to the people of Judah, the southern kingdom, "Don't go getting all proud of yourselves as if you're somehow or another better than your northern cousin, your northern sister, Israel, whom I divorced and gave a certificate of divorce."

And as we examined that, we saw how part of that certificate of divorce was that the people of God would be exiled, kicked out of the house, put out of the house for 70 years. That's what Jeremiah had prophesied.

Now, it's interesting to me as I look at Daniel in Daniel 9:1, that Daniel who was taken into captivity and raised in Babylon under the authority of the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, and who saw the fall of Babylon to the Medo-Persian empire in 539 BC, that Daniel, knowing all of that and this is when this takes place, 539 BC, "In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures." So Daniel's been studying the Bible and he's been praying.

You know, that's the one thing you can do, study the Bible, and pray?

You know, according to our place and calling in life, there's not a whole lot you can do about the kinds of things that are going on in our world but what Daniel is doing. He prayed and he studied the Bible and God spoke to him very clearly.

Now one of the things I want you to notice is Darius the Mede. Who was Darius the Mede? Well, history doesn't record him so there are a lot of people who think, "Well, he must be this person. He must be that person. He must actually be Cyrus the Great."

Cyrus the Great was a Persian. Darius was a Mede. The Xerxes here is not the same as the Xerxes later on in the Bible. This is a man whose history became erased by the powers that be. Does that sound strange? Do you mean that there can be historical figures that are utterly, totally and absolutely eradicated? Yes. Yes, I've seen personal examples of that.

When I was on the board of the southern region of the Boy Scouts, the head of AT&T, Randall Stephenson, altered history. You cannot find anywhere on the internet that Randall Stephenson was President of the Boy Scouts when the Boy Scouts made their very significant decision regarding membership.

It's not there, but I know he was the President because he didn't accept my personal registered letter, and so then I went to Amazon, and I sent a book and they signed for the book. And that happened. I know it happened.

I know he was President of the Boy Scouts, but he got so much hate because of his being President when that happened that the stockholders of AT&T put pressure on him.

Qnd not only did he step down temporarily from being President and got George Bush and Barack Obama's Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, to be the President.

Isn't that curious? Does it ever make you think that the two parties are all part of the same football league?

Anyhow, he got Robert Gates to become the President and to carry out the thing, because Robert Gates had nothing to lose. And after that, Randall Stephenson became President officially again.

Do you mean to tell me that in the modern world with the internet and all of these sources for news, that you can change history?

Yeah, if you're powerful enough, and Randall Stephenson certainly was.

Wow, he eradicated the fact that he existed as President of the Boy Scouts when all those extremely controversial decisions came down? Yes, he did.

So, you look at history: Throughout history people eradicate the losers, and sometimes the winners deliberately eradicate themselves, so they won't be caught with their hands in the cookie jar.

So, Darius the Mede really did exist. He was a Mede, not a Persian. It's interesting in Daniel's prophecies in another place, you discover that it's described as an animal where one horn is short and the other one's long, and then the shorter horn comes up much taller than the first horn. And so, it was the empire of the Medes who merged with the Persians and then the Persians became the dominant leaders.

So, it's 539 BC, the rule is Darius the Mede, the son of Xerxes who's also named with Ahasuerus, but not the Xerxes Ahasuerus of the book of Esther. So, this is interesting. It's 539 BC and so Daniel's studying the Bible.

When strange things happen like what we've seen happen in Texas this past week, it's time to get our Bibles out and to realize the only real source of truth in the world today is the written word of God.

The news is full of lies. It is. It is. It is, and it's finger-pointing. Why should that surprise us? You know, over the years initially myself and then later with my wife, I probably counseled somewhere around a thousand people, and the reason I've counseled so many people, is I'm free and I never charged and wouldn't accept, and so that brings a lot of people to your door, calling on the phone, "Can we come see you?"

And I discovered one thing in personal conflicts: It's David's fault, It's Carol's fault; It ain't my fault. That's human nature. That's human nature

and so it shouldn't surprise us that Cyrus the Great, the Persian, eradicates Darius the Mede, and it shouldn't surprise us when we read the news about finger-pointing.

But let's read on here, and so Daniel has gone to the Bible, and he's studied Jeremiah, and then look at verse 4, he says:

"I prayed to the LORD my God," he uses the personal name of God, Yahweh, "I prayed to Yahweh, my God," and he did something else, he confessed. Now I want you to, we're going to come back there, I want you to turn with me for a moment to Leviticus 26 and we're going to look at verse 27. Leviticus 26 and we're going to look at verse 27.

Leviticus is one of the two big chapters in the first five books of the Bible, the books of Moses, which have extensive blessing and curses sections in them. So, if you look at Leviticus 26:27 on page 198 you'll see this:

"If in spite of this you still do not listen to me but continue to be hostile toward me, then in my anger I will be hostile toward you, and I myself will punish you for your sins seven times over." Look at some of the things you'll see.

What's the first thing? Verse 29, "You will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters. I will destroy your high places," and so on. So, in the curses, one of the curses on Israel was a curse regarding their children. That was a curse in Leviticus 26, and also in Deuteronomy 28.

But now look over at verse 40, Leviticus 26:40: "But if they will confess their sins."

So why is Daniel—Who has been studying his Bible, who pulled out the scrolls and studied them as he saw, he had lived through these empires, Babylon, and now Babylon has fallen, and now they're under the empire of the Medes and Persians—What is Daniel doing, and why is he doing it?

He's going to verse 40—though they didn't have verses back then, but he's going to this section of Leviticus 26:

"But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers—their treachery against me and their hostility toward me, which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies—then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. For the land will be

deserted by them and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them.”

Now turning back to Daniel, you see what he’s doing there in Daniel 9:4:

“I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: ‘O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands.’”

Most people in America are going to hell. Most people that belong to churches in America are going to hell.

What is a real believer? Just as in the Old Testament: Those who love God and obey his commands.

Are we saved by obeying God’s commands? No, but we’re not saved without them. What do I mean? We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, but there are evidences that we are true Christians.

The first evidence that we’re a true believer is do we love the Lord? There are millions of American Christians who do not love the Lord, who do not love the Lord. I was thinking of the hymn we sang, “I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold.” I’m going to tell you that there are many preachers who would rather have gold than have Jesus.

So, the test of being a Christian is, what?

Do I love the Lord Jesus Christ? Do I love him? Do I love him, and do I attempt to obey his commands? Notice I said “attempt.”

When we join a Presbyterian church, we promise in humble reliance upon the Holy Spirit to endeavor to live in a way that becomes a Christian, that reflects Christianity, so that when people see us, what should they see?

Well, they’re going to see sin, they’re going to see sin. I was reminded of that just Friday night as our grandchildren stood up and told stories about me, and my children told stories about me down in Baton Rouge, as we had a delayed 75th birthday party. And I was struck as I heard what they said, and as I took the things they had written and I meditated on them, one thing I said to Sandy, I said:

“Well, it’s very plain that I’m a sinner. It’s very plain that I come short of being what I ought to be.”

But I can say this: from the day that I became a true Christian, September 4, 1964, I began to endeavor to live the way that a Christian ought to live.

What happened when I fell into sin? You could ask my children this, I always would go to them and say:

“Look, I’ve sinned. Would you please forgive me?” And they all remembered that. They all remembered the fact that when I sinned, and it was pretty obvious that I was a sinner, that I always went to them and said, “I’ve sinned. Would you forgive me?” And that is a huge mark.

In other words, real Christians do sin, but real Christians love the Lord Jesus, and real Christians endeavor to obey God’s commands.

Now notice what he says in verse 5:

“We have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.”

What’s he doing? He’s saying, “Lord, we’re responsible for what daddy did.” Are you kidding me? Are you kidding me, we’re responsible for what daddy did, what granddaddy did, what great granddaddy did?

Do you mean that when we confess our sin, we’ve got to include our ancestors in the mix? That’s what Daniel did, and Daniel did it because that’s what God Almighty, through Moses, gave in Leviticus 26, you’re going to have to confess your sins and the sins of those who went before you.

You need to understand something, we live in a time of radical individualism:

“Me and my Bible, I don’t need the church. I can take my Bible in that fishing boat on Sunday morning and, boy! Do I worship the Lord when I catch that 30 pound bass!” What? Are there such?

We live in an era of individualism, but I want you to understand that God deals with people as part of people groups. That doesn’t mean that people groups go to heaven and people groups go to hell, but it does mean in this life God deals with people in terms of people groups.

God looks at Trinity Presbyterian Church as a group. God looks at First Baptist of Texarkana as a people group, and so on. And God looks at the Texarkana community in Arkansas as a group, as well as those in Texas as a group.

In other words, God looks at states and counties and parishes, groups of people. And so, what Daniel is doing here is very significant, it’s highly

significant: He's taking responsibility for the sins of his people, his ancestors, his fellow countrymen, those in Jerusalem, those in Judea, those in Samaria, those who have gone before, and he's taking responsibility. He's not saying:

"It's daddy's fault, it's not mine."

He's saying, "It's my fault, and it's daddy's fault."

Do you understand what he's doing? This is very important because it comes right home to where we are today.

So, Daniel is praying to God and confessing his sins. Now notice what happens as he has prayed. Look down here on the next page 1,388, and can you hear the emotion in his voice? Do you ever pray emotionally? You know when you're desperate, you pray, "Give me liberty, or give me death prayers." What's that?

That's when you're desperate. That's when you're sick of sin. That's when you're sick and tired of how you are and you want help, you need deliverance.

Nobody can deliver Texas but the Lord Jesus Christ! Nobody can rescue the lands along the border except the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, notice he's desperate.

Man! What a prayer for today. Look at Daniel 9:19, page 1,388:

"O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name."

That's praying. Do you know that most people don't get their prayers answered for a lot of reasons?

One is lack of faith in the promises of God.

Another is a failure to repent of sin.

And another is:

"Uh, Lord, uh, please help us. Uh, please help us. Uh, uh, Lord, yeah and bless all our schools and all our schoolchildren."

You know, when people get their prayers heard, they're praying with earnestness and emotion. I mean, that's what you see in the Bible.

"O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name."

Now notice in verse 20, “While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill—while I was still in prayer, Gabriel . . .”

Gabriel is only mentioned four times in the Bible, twice in the book of Daniel. Gabriel’s name in Hebrew means “God is my hero.” God is my hero, “Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.” And he begins to tell Daniel something that is the core of understanding the history of the world following their return. And something’s up.

I want you to notice over across the page, Daniel 10:1:

“In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia.” Now when is that?

That’s two years later. What’s going on? Daniel’s scratching his head and saying, “Lord, what’s going on?” Cyrus the Great issued the proclamation that, “Your people could return to the Holy Land in 539 BC, and they returned but, Lord, something isn’t right, something isn’t right.”

It’s two years later, something’s wrong. “What’s going on, Lord? What’s going on?” “In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar).”

That takes it back to the very beginning. Nebuchadnezzar renamed Daniel Belteshazzar. “Its message was true, and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision.”

So, what you need to understand is two years have passed and Daniel’s saying:

“Lord, did you lie? Lord, didn’t you promise in the book of Jeremiah that your people would be restored to your land that you had given them, Jerusalem, Judea? Didn’t you promise they would return and be blessed? Where’s the blessing, God?”

If you want to understand what happened, read the book of Ezra, you discover they had opposition almost immediately and so instead of doing the one thing that was absolutely central for their survival, which is worship, they were stopped. They were stopped by foreigners, by spies, by turncoats within their own people, and they didn’t get the thing done until 520 and completed it in 516.

So, Daniel’s looking at it and he’s saying, “Lord, what in the world is going on? Did you lie? Where’s your promise, O God? You promised that if we

confessed our sins and the sins of our people, the sins of our ancestors, you would restore us.”

It hadn't happened so look at Daniel 10:1, page 1,389, “In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel.”

Look at verse 2, “At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks.” So, Daniel's praying. He's earnest. He's serious. He's fasting before God. He is humbling himself before God. He's seeking God's face in an incredible way.

He says in verse 3, “I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips,” he obviously drank water, “I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.”

So, what Daniel has done is he's shut himself up in the prayer room. He's drinking water but he's not doing anything else. He's an old man. Daniel's older than I am—that's old—and he shut himself up in his prayer room seeking God in prayer and fasting and Scripture study, and then notice verse 4,

“On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.”

Verse 7, “I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. So, I was left alone.” I made a mistake; he was with other people, but he was obviously with other people who were praying and seeking God. They fled because it was terrifying. You want a real encounter with God like this? I think I'd have a heart attack. Wow, that must be awful.

He says, “So I was left alone,” verse 8, “gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale, and I was helpless. Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.”

Verse 10, “A hand touched me,”—Do you know what it actually says in the Hebrew? A hand hit me.

“Wake up. Don't you sleep in church. Wake up, Daniel.” He didn't just touch him like, you know, “Nice Daniel,” he popped him, “A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees.

He said, ‘Daniel,’” verse 11, “‘you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.’ And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.” Have you ever been weak, not eating enough, blood sugar drops, you stand up and you start to tremble all over, feel like you’re going to fall down?

Verse 12, “Then he continued, ‘Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But . . .”

Now wait a minute, what we’ve just read, he said, “The very first day when you began to pray and fast and seek my face, at the very beginning your words were heard and I’ve come.”

What’s he saying? Well, you’re about to see what he’s really saying, he’s saying that Daniel’s prayer was answered by God on day one.

But, but, he says, “But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days.”

How long is 21 days? Three weeks. When did Daniel begin to pray and fast?

Twenty-one days before, three weeks before. Notice God answered his prayer. It’s kind of like, let’s see, Mr. Joe, you used to be in the post office and Mr. Steve used to be in the post office, did you ever get a letter that somehow or another got misplaced and then suddenly you found it and you took it out on your route to deliver it to somebody three weeks late?

Did that ever happen? Norma Jean is nodding her head, so does Steve. Wow.

Do you mean that God sent a letter to Daniel, overnighted it, actually he didn’t even overnight it, it was the very moment when God saw Daniel’s broken heart, heard his weeping and wailing and crying out to God, he sent an answer.

But what happened to the answer? Well, we’re told right here. It’s very plain.

“The prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days.” Do you mean there might be a place in Texarkana where a postman might get held up and his bag stolen? Could that happen in Texarkana, Texas or Texarkana, Arkansas? “My birthday present was in that bag.” Sorry.

But this is something in the unseen world. This is something that happened in the supernatural world. What happens on earth is governed by what

happens in the invisible world. He was withheld by the prince of the Persian kingdom for 21 days.

Then notice he says, “Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me.”

Who is Michael? Michael’s name is “who is like God?” Michael is the archangel directly responsible for the children of Israel, and Gabriel is the one obviously speaking here, an archangel has been held up and delayed by a demonic principality called the prince of Persia.

Then he says, “Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.”

The king of Persia is not the earthly king of Persia. The king of Persia at this point is the supernatural power over the Persian kingdom. He’s probably still around because Iran is still active.

Did you know there’s a principality over Texarkana? Do you know there’s a principality over the school system of Texas that’s not God?

Did you know that every geographical territory, every ethnic group, every people group has ranks of godly and ungodly angels? Did you know that?

Do you want to know why what happens in Uvalde happened? Because evil principalities and powers stirred up the natural rage in a young man who had been bullied, raised without a daddy, and set him loose.

“You mean Satan was involved in that?” Absolutely! Satan was involved in it. There are principalities and powers. There are principalities and powers assigned to this church to keep it from growing, to keep people dead in their awareness of what’s going on in the world today.

Look at it, that’s what he’s saying. He says:

“Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.”

And he’s going to tell him about the future, and then at the very end we want to read something. He says there on the top of the next column, page 1,390, he says in verse 20:

“So, he said, ‘Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come.’”

What's he saying? He's saying that world history, who's elected in an election, who's lost in an election, whoever conquers a nation, that all of these things are not random and chance.

God has an overall plan: "Whatsoever comes to pass, yet so as God is not the author of sin, nor does he do violence to the will of the creature, remove second causes, but rather establishes them" (*Cf. Westminster Confession of Faith*, III, i).

And what he's saying is, "Daniel, I'm Gabriel, I've got to go back and fight this prince, and when I go the prince of Greece will come."

What does he mean? He means that Alexander the Great, who was not of Greece but Macedonia, was raised up and given power by Satan himself, but not independent of God's ordination.

You see, that's a great mystery, isn't it?

When Jesus was tempted by Satan, and Jesus was shown all the kingdoms of the world and all their glory, he saw the kingdom of Persia, he saw the kingdom of Babylon, he saw the kingdom of Greece, he saw the kingdom of Rome. He saw all that would happen, including the fall of Rome in the Western Empire in 476, and the fall of Rome in the Eastern Empire. He saw all of that.

He saw the United States of America which took over the Colonies of Britain and became the world's policeman after the British empire got bankrupted in World War I. He saw all that. He saw all of that, all the glory.

What a glorious nation is the United States of America. There's never been an empire like the American empire, and Jesus saw that, and Satan said, "I'll give it to you. I'll give it to you."

And he just knew one thing, "Forget about God and bow down and worship me, because all this is mine to give."

Now Satan, you've got to remember this—he's a liar, but his best lies are half-truths. Satan had the power to give Jesus all of that.

What would have happened if Jesus said, "Okay, I'm going to worship you"? At that point Jesus would have been killed because Jesus, who was truly God and truly human in one person, who in his divine nature could not sin, but in his human nature was subject to temptation, had he sinned against God by worshiping Satan, it would have been over. (Of course, this couldn't happen because the Father ordained that the Lord Jesus could not sin, and our Lord's divine nature upheld his human nature.)

And what would it have been for us? Nothing but hell. We'd all end up in hell, every single one of us.

But you see here that there's a mystery in the governance of the world, and the mystery in the governance of the world is this:

Satan has power to motivate through his demon spirits an angry young man, and he has "motivation power" to cause the local law enforcement to delay going into the school.

You know, parents went in that school, and they waited until the border patrol came. I cannot believe that. Heaven help us! We're in a terrible time! We're in a time when principalities are warring against each other.

We're in a time when hell has been unleashed in our world, and all of this Satan has a hand in.

But remember this: "Not a sparrow falls to the ground apart from our heavenly Father, and the very hairs of our head are numbered" (Matthew 10:29-30).

But notice what he says, verse 21, "But first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth."

The Book of Truth. The Book of Truth is the heavenly counterpart to this which you hold in your hand. And he says this, "No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince. And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him."

Let me wrap this up.

Could God have stopped that? Of course. God can do anything, but there are things God cannot do. God cannot lie. God cannot steal. God cannot commit adultery. And God limits his actions in the world in accordance with his own holy perfect nature, and God has ordained that he will act in response to human brokenness, to human prayers and pleading:

"O God, help us because we don't know what to do! What are we going to do, Lord?" (Cf. 2 Chronicles 20:12)

God responds to that.

What can you do?

Well, our confessional documents say that we can do things "according to our place and calling" (*Westminster Larger Catechism* # 108).

Has God called any of you to be a police officer? Well, if he has there are things you can do.

Has he called you to be in the army? Well, if he has there are things you can do.

Has he called you to protect your family? Well, yes, then there are things you can do to protect your family.

Well, what is the one thing that absolutely everybody can do? It's get off our high-horse and get on our face before God and cry out and say, "O Lord, we don't know what to do! Help us! Help us!" (Cf. 2 Chronicles 20:12)

"And if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, then will I hear from heaven." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

You know, there are going to be more things like that.

I think you should do background checks myself. People who are criminals should be checked and not allowed to buy things. I'm just giving a little policy view. Don't hold it against me, but what I'm telling you is, you can have the best gun control laws in the world.

Does the military have weapons? Yes.

Is every soldier in every country in all the world honest?

Do soldiers want to make a little extra money? What's the best way to make a little money? Sell weapons that you have access to, to other people. You know, I'll say it again, you see the bumper sticker "When guns are outlawed only outlaws will have guns"? So that's true. What's the solution?

The solution is—there ain't no solution except one,

"If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, I'll hear from heaven."

Do you want our schoolchildren to be protected? Humble yourself and pray before God, petition those who are in power to allow public prayer in the schools again.

You know, when God is outlawed—I grew up in a world where we memorized the Bible in the public schools. I grew up in a world where we prayed and even when the Supreme Court came out in '63, I remember even when I graduated from high school in '65, we still had prayer over the PA.

Oh, you can't do that. Who says? Who says? But you take the law in your own hands, you're no different than that boy that shot and killed all those poor children. What you can do is pray.

I hope I've challenged you to pray because it's the one and only thing we can do to stop this tragedy and terror that is stalking our land, because there

are enough crazy people in our country that all they need is a few demons to tickle their imagination, and they're going to go out and start shooting people in the mall. They're going to go out and start shooting in the schools. And I don't care what you do, somebody can be on the inside and tape a door open, and they not know it.

“What are we going to do? Oh, no, you've made us scared, Bob, what if they come in here now, what are we going to do?”

I'll tell you this: “One bright morning when this life is o'er, I'll fly away.” That's the only assurance we've got is God's written word, his promises and prayer. If this nation will turn to God, God will give wisdom and unity to our leaders to do what they need to do.

May we pray.

Lord, I pray as we look at this terrible tragedy, as we look at all of us have children and grandchildren, Lord, who are in harm's way all the time.

My son lives in Memphis in a bad part of town. Lord, my three grandchildren live there. It's not a bad bad, but it's on the border of bad bad. What can I do? I cannot protect them, so I mail order a bunch of AR15's to him, or do I mail order from heaven's throne, angelic warriors to go and defend my children and grandchildren in a city with a lot of violence—the city where I used to be a pastor—highest per capita murder rate for that sized city in the United States.

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy. O Lamb of God, you who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us and give us to believe that while Satan blocks prayers, if we will continue to pray those answers will come. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.