

## Deliver this City

*Dan 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon **thy holy city**, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*

### I. **Message #1** Dealing with the Fear factor

#### A. Trust still in Jesus

1. Fear factor overtaking U.S. What is the response of the church to threats of armed violence? Should we arm ourselves and prepare for a battle? Is this civil war?
2. Be wary of how religious groups are being pulled into placing our trust in a political candidate. I feel bold to declare that it is a sin against God to place all our hopes in the political power of an individual.
3. It is understandable when we feel letdown when our favorite team loses the game, or when someone else gets the promotion, or even when our candidate loses.
4. Every football game ends with half of the fans feeling disappointed, and every election ends leaving half the people feeling disappointed.
5. But we do not put the same kind of faith in sports players or even political candidates, that we place on Jesus Christ.
6. It is Jesus in whom we must place our full and complete trust, especially when we are disappointed by circumstances.

#### B. Persecuted but not forsaken

1. I want to make something clear: the church is not in danger of being destroyed, not now—not ever.
2. The apostle Paul showed us how to look at feeling cast down and even being persecuted:  
*2 Cor 4:7-9*  
*7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*  
*8 We are **troubled** on every side, yet not **distressed**; we are **perplexed**, but not **in despair**;*  
*9 **Persecuted**, but not **forsaken**; **cast down**, but not **destroyed**;*
3. The church is not in danger of being destroyed so don't be distressed or in despair.
4. Not even in Paul's days when Roman emperors sought to murder the early Christians; not even in the dark ages when papal edicts commissioned the burning at stake of those whose views didn't align with Rome; and even not when Islam, Communism, Fascism, Nazism, Socialism, secularism, or post-modernism have tried to eradicate Christianity—has the church ever been in danger of being destroyed.
5. That doesn't mean that the church will not undergo persecutions. The persecution of Christians is not something new on the world scene, and we are not promised exemption from enduring persecution for the Lord's sake.

6. Speaking of the last days, Jesus said:  
*Matt 24:8-10*  
*8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.*  
*9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*  
*10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.*
- C. Response in persecution
  1. What should our response be to persecution? Or as we call it today, threats to religious liberty?
  2. When Jesus was threatened, Peter took up arms—he pulled out his sword. But what was Jesus' response?  
*Matt 26:51-52*  
*51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.*  
*52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.*
  3. The sword has its place, but not in the hand of the man of God. In fact, from Luke 22:38, we find that not only was Peter packing iron when they went to prayer meeting, there was a second sword among their group.
  4. But we see from this that Jesus did not go into attack mode, but damage control mode, as **He healed the damage caused by the sword.**
  5. But what did Jesus call for in response to persecution?  
*Luke 6:22-23*  
*22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.*  
*23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.*
  6. Put your sword away, rejoice, and leap for joy.
  7. Why? That is so ignorant, so naïve. In fact, it was this quality of Christianity that caused Hitler to turn his back on the church in Nazi Germany. He said it was too soft, and not Arian enough.
  8. Well it obviously not American enough for many either.
  9. But while some may be stockpiling weapons, stocking up on ammunition, cleaning their gun barrels, Jesus is saying, I am with you—even though you will be hated and persecuted:  
*Luke 21:17-19*  
*17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.*  
*18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish.*  
*19 In your patience possess ye your souls.*
  10. Keep Jesus in the place as Lord and Savior and trust Him to keep you.
- D. Vaccine

1. What about the vaccine. Is it the mark of the beast? Is it big pharmaceuticals and big tech uniting to alter the DNA of religious people to make us robots under their command?
2. Is the vaccine safe and should I get it?
3. Some worry that the development of this vaccine has been rushed, and that is true. It was rushed by Operation Warp Speed, initiated by a united effort against a destructive virus that has significantly altered the lives of everyone on the planet, and ended the lives of almost 400,000 in the US and over 2 million across the world.
4. I have been reading and listening to what I can get my hands on, from YouTube videos being forwarded through Facebook messenger warning that the vaccine caused horrible deformity and disease, to it is reprogramming the DNA of religious people.
5. I've also read from medical journals how all the abundant safety protocols were followed in massive test trials.
6. And about reprogramming our DNA, the confusion has arisen from that these vaccines use RNA, which some confuse with DNA.
7. Rather than putting a tiny portion of the virus into your body like most other vaccines do, the new vaccines work like some modern cancer treatments that use RNA to produce proteins that help the immune system defend against the virus.
8. As a pastor and not a medical professional, I am not qualified to give medical recommendations, but I would not fear this vaccine as the evil that some are proposing it to be.

II. **Message #2** Treasure maps

A. God valued these people

1. In 2020, I introduced the idea of treasure maps, or places that scripture identified as people God values as treasure, and how God sought them out to minister to.

2. During the fast we saw one of those passages in Isaiah 58.

*Isa 58:6-7*

*6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?*

*7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?*

3. The fast God has chosen included instruction like this: "I want you to" loose the **bands of wickedness**, undo **heavy burdens**, let the **oppressed** go free, that ye break every **yoke**, deal bread to the **hungry**, clothe the **naked**, house the **homeless**, and don't turn away **hurting family**.
4. These are treasures God values that need ministry focus.
5. Then Jesus built on that group in Luke 4:18-19. Jesus said, in fulfilling Messianic prophecies of Isaiah 61, He was sent to **preach** the gospel to the **poor**, proclaim release to **captives**, recovering sight to the **blind**, set **oppressed** free, and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.
6. These are treasures God values that need ministry focus.

7. Plus, there is a treasure Jesus identified in Matthew 25:35-36, where He said, when you have done it to the least of these, you have done it unto me.
  8. There he identified these treasure rescue efforts: feeding **hungry**, giving drink to the **thirsty**, housing the **stranger**, clothing the **naked**, taking care of **sick**, visiting **prisoners**.
  9. These are treasures God values that need ministry focus, and that focus will be greatly rewarded.
  10. James the brother of Jesus, in James 1:27 identified more treasure rescue efforts: caring for **orphans** and **widows** in **misfortune**.
  11. These are treasures God values that need ministry focus.
- B. Area opening to us? Food pantry
1. Well, as we take a renewed **2021 Field Focus**, I would like for us to be on the lookout for the Lord to open the door to such **treasure rescue efforts**—in other words, **ministries to people in these situations**.
  2. **What treasure rescue effort will we focus on in 2021?**
  3. Not only are there material needs found in these fields that I believe the Lord will supply us the means to provide, but as a church called to these fields, Jesus said we must **preach the gospel** which would **release** captives, **give sight**, **set free**, and move them into the year of the **Lord's favor**.
  4. And if there is anything oppressed people need, it is the grace of God being revealed in their lives that gives them the promise of hope of a new life.
  5. We presently have some open doors that may be the “baby-steps beginning” of opening a food pantry.
  6. Bro. Dean has made connections to a resource that can provide a regular supply of food items, and I have had two other people speak to me offering to volunteer to work such a ministry.
  7. Space is a problem and while we could use the fellowship hall on a limited basis for a short time, we would certainly need to come up with a different space if this ministry were to grow through field focus.
  8. Providing clothes to those in need is something we have already been doing on a limited basis. Perhaps this effort can grow through a greater field focus.
  9. Visiting prisoners is something that has been done to some degree. Perhaps this will be the year that we can take CIP into the jail or prison, if doors open for this field focus.
  10. Will you pray about these treasure maps where God has treasures He wants to reach and rescue?
- III. **Message #3** Repentance brings Grace to Deliver this City
- A. Evil consequences tied to evil choices
  1. When sin dominates a nation, a state, a city, a home, the consequences of sin will follow.
  2. Here are a few examples of how that works, starting with the law of the harvest:

3. *Gal 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*
  4. *Prov 16:18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*
  5. *Prov 13:15 Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.*
  6. *Num 32:23 But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.*
  7. The connection between choices and consequences is sure.
  8. Consequences will catch up to us as individuals, families, cities, states, nations. That is why there is a present danger to our nation for rejecting God.
  9. Daniel mentioned this connection in his prayer of repentance for his nation:  
*Dan 9:12-14*  
*12 And he hath **confirmed his words**, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven **hath not been done** as hath been done upon Jerusalem.*
  10. Daniel looked at the horrible tragedies that had befallen Jerusalem, and said it was “unprecedented.” We’ve never seen it on this order before.  
*13 **As it is written** in the law of Moses, **all this evil is come upon us**: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.*  
*14 Therefore hath the LORD **watched upon the evil** [like a watchman on the wall, saw it coming], and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.*
- B. Repentance tied to mercy
1. But so far we have only looked at the law of the harvest as it plays out with evil choices leading to evil consequences.
  2. But what about when a person makes a change in their choices? Can different choices lead to different consequences? There is an entire chapter of the Bible that deals with this question: Ezekiel 18.
  3. Look at the two verses that summarize the principles found there:  
*Ezek 18:21 But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.*  
*Ezek 18:26 When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.*
  4. So with making the right choice in mind, God made clear His desire:  
*Ezek 18:30-32*  
*30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.*  
*31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*  
*32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.*

- C. An end of sins
1. But what about our nation? Our city? Can we repent on the behalf of that nation, or city, or another individual?
  2. Doesn't a person have to take responsibility and give account for his own sins before God?
  3. Yes, individuals are individually responsible, and we cannot repent on behalf of another to earn them forgiveness of sins.
  4. So what good did it do for Daniel to repent on behalf of his nation in ruins? What was the result of Daniel's prayer of repentance for his land?
  5. The very next verses in Daniel 9 following Daniel's prayer of repentance, speak of the angel Gabriel flying swiftly to Daniel while he was still repenting on his behalf and on behalf of his people:  
*Dan 9:22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.*
  6. Gabriel brought Daniel understanding in response to his prayer:  
*Dan 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon **thy holy city** [but it was in desolation!], to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*
  7. History records that two years after Daniel prayed, the man Ezra went to Jerusalem and laid the foundation for rebuilding the temple.
  8. Gabriel called that city of desolation a holy city, and in time, the temple was rebuilt.
  9. In fact, it was that same temple Ezra started building, that years later Herod the Great continued rebuilding, and that Jesus the Messiah walked into bringing the fulfillment of that prophecy to Daniel.
  10. And it was just outside of that holy city that Jesus finished the transgression, made an end of sins, and reconciled iniquity, and brought righteousness.
  11. Church, I don't know how long it will take, but our hope is to repent for our city until Jesus makes an end of sins and brings reconciliation and righteousness.
- IV. Conclusion
1. Where there is repentance, there is mercy. Repentance allows mercy that forgives and grace that restores.
  2. We spoke of the law of the harvest. There is another law that can supersede the law of the harvest, that is the law of grace—God's grace:  
*Rom 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*
  3. Even where sin abounds, grace is greater:  
*Rom 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*