

## What's Going On?

Pastor Ken

April 12, 2026

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line, we have been praying for you! Those who are new to Bethel Life Center or new to the Bible, we are going through Matthew 24-25. We teach right out of Bible at Bethel. Now, with Tax Day this week, April 15, I want to remind you of some words from our Savior about taxes and giving. Look on the screen at this verse,

*<sup>17</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him. (Mark 12:17-NIV)*

Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." I think it is pretty straight forward, be honest about giving to God and be honest about giving to the government. Stop fudging. Stop be untruthful about your giving. Today is good day to start on a path of integrity. Thank you for your giving on-line, text to give, drop it off in the black boxes or mail in. In a minute I will pray over your giving to God.

### **The signs of the end times are to make you cheerful, not fearful.**

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*<sup>7</sup> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of birth pains." (Matthew 24-NIV)*

500 years ago, sailors were afraid to travel beyond the horizon. Sail too far and you run the risk of sailing over the edge. Losing life and cargo. So, they reasoned. So, they thought. So, they limited their exploration.

The common wisdom of the day, play it safe and stay away from the **unknown**.

Then a statue was placed at the Straight of Gibraltar, where the Spaniards had dominion over both sides of the straight. This is the narrowest margin, where you can stand in Africa and look across the straight and see Europe.

Near the entrance of the straight, the pillar of Hercules stood, a huge marker bore in its stone the words, in Latin,

**Ne Plus Ultra. No More Beyond.**

Then a Spanish boy played in the ocean. The boy walked along the beach. The boy cast his eyes toward the ocean horizon. The boy put out to sea to learn the trade of the Spanish explorer. Christopher Columbus and his voyage of 1492 entered a new era and entered a new world as he left the shores and the doors of Spain launching travels beyond the horizon.

And beyond the horizon Columbus traveled, where the barrier was broken and so they took the Latin phrase "**No More Beyond,**" and removed the first word and minted Spanish coins with the slogan, "**More Beyond.**"

Every day the world travels beyond the horizon line. You were made by God to explore what is approaching at the end of the age. Remove the **NO** from your future. Open your heart and life to God's promises of Sovereignty as He is working his End Times Plan.

Yes, God has an End Times clock where sand is slipping through an hourglass.

Now, let me offer a warning about this next sermon series-**What's Going On**, a study about the End Times. There are some things we will understand clearly, hurray for getting the right answer in class when you go to the chalk board.

But we must also be humble enough to admit some things in our Travelers Guide to the End Times, we will miss entirely. For so many they miss the punch line. The clue phone is ringing, and they fail to answer it. They miss the plot all together. So, what is the plot, pastor?

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Again, the signs of the end times are to make you cheerful, not fearful.

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Whether you think the Antichrist will be Jewish or Muslim. Whether you have read the book of Daniel or Revelation or not.

We are all headed in the same direction. Each day brings us closer to a final heartbeat. A final breath. A final "I Love You, Danice."

An airplane gets lost in a storm over the Atlantic Ocean as it flies through the middle of a hurricane. The captain has decided to notify the passengers as to his level of concern, level of threat, so he grabs his intercom and turns it on.

The first words out his mouth are, “the bad news is that we have lost our guidance and radar system, it has gone dark and we have no way to determine **where we are going**, or **what direction we are headed**.”

But cheer up friends, the good news is we are making good time!”

The world is filled with billions of humans making good time, as they wander lost, wander aimlessly with no clue where they are, even more sad, or where they are going.

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God’s word is clear. God has a Sovereign plan that is unfolding before your very eyes. Watch the nightly news or grab your screen and go to your preferred media outlet. News is synced with God’s providence, God’s plan even though the news reporting has no idea it is reporting End Times news. David Muir and the Messiah Jesus are on the same page more than most of us realize.

No one is getting any younger. Death comes to the young, old, perfectly healthy, those hanging on by life support. Death comes to the evil and too the environmentalist. Death comes to the delightful and to the deprived.

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*26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27<sup>a</sup> People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. (Luke 17-NIV)*

Danice and I have 1 beauty and 3 beasts. Kenny was born in San Diego, and Rebekah (Chewbeka), Jesse and Joseph were born in Everett, Washington. I too grew up in Everett, Washington. The home of the original Boeing Plant.

When Kenny came along, we had been married about 2 years, and served as the college Pastors in San Diego, California. We had no family in the area and so the pregnancy journey for this transplanted Texas family was not only new, but it was also by ourselves.

The joy of being new parents was thrilling. We went to doctor appointments together. We were excited but also anxious at the same time. Danice and I traveled the pregnancy road together.

In the **Travelers Guide** for first time parents there was early pregnancy sickness and suggestions to take La Mas classes. We read all pregnancy literature we could get our hands on and asked all kinds of questions about having a baby.

We moved from an apartment to larger house making room for an expanding family. Then one day, preborn little Kenny made himself known. A kick here, a bump there. I had to put my hand on Danice's belly to feel the kick myself. Life was growing. Now, Danice had to be concerned about diet, strenuous exercise and getting some extra rest. Then we finally arrived at the last month of pregnancy. The 9<sup>th</sup> month, it was December and still sunny and warm in San Diego.

One evening Danice and I were eating in our favorite Mexican restaurant just a couple of weeks before Kenny was to arrive, and surprisingly we saw Danice's, baby doctor in the same Mexican restaurant. We tried to hide behind the menus. We positioned our chairs to not look at him. If we had one of those big nose and black mustache props, we would have put it on.

Then the moment of truth, as doc was leaving, he strolled past our table, greeted us, asked how Danice she was doing, and said, "you and the baby will feel that those enchilada's tomorrow." Our responsibility was to get ready for delivery, be patient, not live with anxiety. We were to cast off fear and lower the RPMs of apprehension because we were under good care by the that doctor and Grossmont Hospital.

By now, some moms listening to this are cringing, smiling or wondering how **did the delivery go?** Like many couples we made a false run to the hospital thinking it was time to have the baby. The doctor was sweet, when he announced those were **only** Braxton's hicks and not birth pains, we were deeply disappointed. We were positively sure we had read the signs correctly.

That day, sadly we retreated to our home and settled in for more waiting. More waiting and wondering. More waiting and working. More waiting and watching.

You would have thought that living in San Diego, walking along the beach and taking in the Mediterranean sun would have somehow added relief and comfort. It did not and Danice was growing increasingly nervous, frustrated and ready to have that baby.

I did not help the matters by adding my unfiltered humor, “there she blows,” I would say. Ouch! Sometimes I would waddle around the house, providing some identificational compassion, although Danice did not see it that way.

One of the great biblical illustrations that Jesus is about to return is the **future approaching birth pains that go with delivery.**

**As a baby is about to be born, even us men know  
that labor pains increase as the delivery draws near.**

It is a time of great hope and new possibilities. I am talking about Jesus’ return and the birth pains indicating the soon arrival of a new baby.

It can also be a time of great fear and anxiety. Again, I am talking about Jesus’ return and the birth pains indicating the soon arrival of a new baby.

Just as the medical profession has spelled out the stages, signs and descriptive elements connected to the birthing journey, complete with details about birth pains, God’s word uses the metaphor of **birth pains** to illustrate that Jesus return is Coming Soon.

So here is my question for you. Is the world experiencing the beginning of birth pains, indicating Jesus Soon Return?

Jesus thinks so, and that was the basis of his teaching in Matthew 24-25, over 2000 years ago. These chapters are Jesus own prophetic predictions about the future.

*<sup>8</sup>All these are the beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

Ok, I need to quit wasting valuable time, the clock is ticking and the sand is pouring. Some of you have been watching the hourglass, and asking yourself, how long will it take for that sand to run out?

Others are thinking I might keep preaching until the sand runs completely out. I am tempted. This is a 4-hour, hourglass. Yes, I am tempted to preach today until the sand runs out, as they say.

There are 3 major biblical passages that spells out God's Sovereign plan for End Time events. The books that contain the essential keys to understanding the future are:

(1) Daniel

(2) Revelation

(3) Matthew, with its Olivet Discourse taught in Matthew 24 and 25.

We will be going through these chapters looking closely at the message Jesus gave to his disciples during the final week of his life. Matthew 24 is Jesus' final sermon about the End Times that he preached from the Mount of Olives.

This sermon is found in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. The sermon was given to only 4 of Jesus disciples. The sermon was Jesus' response to the question, when will come the end come?

*<sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup> "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?" (Mark 13-NIV)*

The tutorial that Peter, James, John and Andrew received was an intimate setting that spelled out an eschatological blueprint of the End Times!

Jesus is talking about the tribulation-seven years of terrible life destroying troubles, which will soon come to pass. The tribulation will be a 7-year season of struggle for all people, Christians and non-Christians. **But especially those who resist Satan.** In the end, those who align with Satan will get their due.

Did you know that God has provided a map for us? Here is one of many that you can look at see the BIG PICTURE. Again, there are some disagreements about the order and some of the actual events, nobody has an airtight forecast of the future. Here is a timeline spelled out in the book, *What Happens Next* by Max Lucado.

This may be shocking, but even Jesus doesn't even know some of the timing. It is beyond his clearance protocol.

*But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (Matthew 24:36-NIV)*

Notice who authored those words-Matthew. One of Jesus followers. **Question.** Since this material was so important, why wasn't Matthew there to take notes that day? If he was to be the eventual author inspired by the Holy Spirit, and if the material was so important you don't want to get it wrong, what was Matthew doing that day on the Mount of Olives?

Again, God is the one who makes the call in all kinds of matters of our lives, he alone has his reasons and Sovereign plan. Matthew the tax collector tells us Jesus has been teaching all day in the temple.

In Matthew 23, he has been delivering some of his harshest sermons before the religious brainiacs. Some of Israel's most zealous do-gooders. Let me offer just the first of 7 woes.

*<sup>13</sup> Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. (Matthew 23-NIV)*

As Jesus is leaving the temple grounds, for the last time the disciples are awestruck by Herod's Temple. They literally walk right past it. Jesus public teaching is now over. It was an emotional and tragic moment, the harshness of the message and the finality of the location.

*<sup>1</sup> Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

After Jesus gave his heated and forceful warnings to the Scribes and Pharisees the disciples left the temple and descended into the Kidron valley and started up the hill called the Mount of Olives.

With Jerusalem packed with tourists, the only lodging available was in nearby Bethany where Jesus had stayed many times with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. A two-mile journey to the home of some friends.

As the disciples ascended to the summit of the Mount of Olives, they glanced back over their shoulders and stared back at Herod's Temple, one the ancient wonders of the world. The gospel of Mark informs us that it was the beauty that caught the disciples attention.

*As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" (Mark 13:1-NIV)*

The disciples were mesmerized by Herod's temple and the sheer size of the stones used to build it. These Galileans had seldom come in contact with such size and strength of architecture. To this day, the Western Wall can still be seen.

In fact, you can get on a video cam and go to the Western Wall. You can put a prayer request into the Western Wall. In response to the disciple's admiration for Herod's temple and its man-made splendor, Jesus replied,"

<sup>2</sup> “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” <sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us, “they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24-NIV)

Jesus surprising response to their child like enthusiasm caught the disciples by surprise. Jesus’ course corrects the disciple’s fixation with buildings and directs them to more important matters than their obsession with the opulent.

That day on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sets forth before disciples the events that would take place in the future, just before his return to earth. Jesus does this in the literary outline I am calling:

### **Six Signs of Jesus’ Return**

Jesus’ return happens in two stages. **First**, there is the rapture where Jesus will return only in the air as he removes Christians from the earth.

<sup>16</sup> *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* <sup>17</sup> *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4-ESV)*

**Second, Jesus returns** to the physical earth bringing with Christians from heaven to engage the Anti-Christ in an End Time battle called The Battle of Armageddon.

<sup>29</sup> *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* <sup>30</sup> *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:29-30-ESV).*

This battle will take place in the Valley of Megiddo, in Israel. Why this valley? More battles have been fought here than any place in the world.

Regarding the end of the age, the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer 30:7), Jesus gives **6 signs** that would be associated with the last generation of people on the earth prior to Jesus’ return and his setting up his earth kingdom or 1000-year reign. What? More about that in the future.

Your homework is to think about these signs as you receive news this week.

**First birth pain:      Widespread deception by false Christs (vs 4-5)**

*<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many." (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Second birth pain:    Increase in wars and rumors of wars (vs 6-7)**

*<sup>6</sup> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. <sup>7</sup> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Third birth pain:      Worldwide devastation by famines and earthquakes (vs 7)**

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**Fourth birth pain:    Acceleration of persecution and death of Christians (vs 7-9)**

*<sup>9</sup> Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Fifth birth pain:      A great falling away from Christ (vs 10-12)**

*<sup>10</sup> At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, <sup>11</sup> and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. <sup>12</sup> Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Sixth birth pain:      Worldwide evangelism (vs 13-14)**

*<sup>13</sup> But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

I don't think Jesus' description of the end was intended to make us scared. It would be easy to become paranoid, in one hand is your screen updating the current end time world news, in the other hand is your Bible as you search for answers. Not a bad idea.

Some become alarmed starting in their mind a countdown to the return of Jesus after learning that certain alarming events in global politics are unfolding. Let me give you three suggestions for living confident in Christ as the sand of time runs out in **this hourglass**.

### **1<sup>st</sup> - Reject the temptation to live in fear.**

Jesus words are not meant to scare you into salvation. Although, some may choose to follow Jesus because of the urgency of the hour.

These warnings in Matthew 24, are designed to get the attention of the wayward, or unbeliever who are in danger of entering into eternity with no plan of salvation to save them from eternal judgement.

*So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10-NIV)*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> - Remember that God is Sovereign**

God is sovereign and He is working His End Time plan.

God is not -partly- Sovereign.

God is not -sometimes- Sovereign.

God is not -mostly- Sovereign.

Are you in love and serving the Lord Jesus Christ who is sovereignly in control of all world events, the timing of events, as well as your personal life.

*Our God is in heaven;  
he does whatever pleases him. (Psalm 115:3-NIV)*

Don't let anyone tell you otherwise, it is a part of the End Time deception that is filling the earth and making its way into the church.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> - Become totally dependent on God's word.**

Read it daily. Apply it often. Start to memorize now.

God's inspired and inerrant word of God takes priority over all other reports. News reports can make you fearful and anxious. God's word settles our hearts and removes our anxieties. If you are slipping into a negative perspective about the future; nothing could be further from the truth.

When Jesus Christ comes, he will be the **Savior** of his people and the **Judge** of the unbeliever. Which Jesus do you want to meet? Savior or Judge. You have to make a choice and do it before it is too late.

**Stop looking at the PROBLEMS of this life and start looking at the promises of the NEXT.**

So, whether you are Ready or Not, Jesus is about to return, in the clouds and then on the earth sometime later after the Tribulation. Are you ready? Let me help you be ready with this final prayer I want to offer you today.

If you asked me what is the one thing, I can do to not be deceived, not live in fear and be ready for Jesus' return? Daily ask God for a fresh Holy Spirit impartation. So, why not ask God to that right now. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Father,

I welcome the Holy Spirit's entry into my life. To be with me. To be in me. To overshadow me. For these reasons and so many others, I feel helpless. I feel inadequate.

I feel unworthy to ask for the Holy Spirit to breathe on me. You said I could ask, so Jesus, breathe on me, the way You breathed on Your disciples. *"And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:22-NIV)*

Even though the Holy Spirit defies understanding and comprehension, I welcome the Holy Spirit into all areas of my life. To baptize me. To overshadow me. To refill me. To empower me. To come upon me.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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The joy of being new parents was thrilling. We went to doctor appointments together. We were excited but also anxious at the same time. Danice and I traveled the pregnancy road together.

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With Jerusalem packed with tourists, the only lodging available was in nearby Bethany where Jesus had stayed many times with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. A two-mile journey to the home of some friends.

As the disciples ascended to the summit of the Mount of Olives, they glanced back over their shoulders and stared back at Herod's Temple, one the ancient wonders of the world. The gospel of Mark informs us that it was the beauty that caught the disciples attention.

*As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" (Mark 13:1-NIV)*

The disciples were mesmerized by Herod's temple and the sheer size of the stones used to build it. These Galileans had seldom come in contact with such size and strength of architecture. To this day, the Western Wall can still be seen.

In fact, you can get on a video cam and go to the Western Wall. You can put a prayer request into the Western Wall. In response to the disciple's admiration for Herod's temple and its man-made splendor, Jesus replied,"

<sup>2</sup> “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” <sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us, “they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24-NIV)

Jesus surprising response to their child like enthusiasm caught the disciples by surprise. Jesus’ course corrects the disciple’s fixation with buildings and directs them to more important matters than their obsession with the opulent.

That day on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sets forth before disciples the events that would take place in the future, just before his return to earth. Jesus does this in the literary outline I am calling:

### **Six Signs of Jesus’ Return**

Jesus’ return happens in two stages. **First**, there is the rapture where Jesus will return only in the air as he removes Christians from the earth.

<sup>16</sup> *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* <sup>17</sup> *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4-ESV)*

**Second, Jesus returns** to the physical earth bringing with Christians from heaven to engage the Anti-Christ in an End Time battle called The Battle of Armageddon.

<sup>29</sup> *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* <sup>30</sup> *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:29-30-ESV).*

This battle will take place in the Valley of Megiddo, in Israel. Why this valley? More battles have been fought here than any place in the world.

Regarding the end of the age, the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer 30:7), Jesus gives **6 signs** that would be associated with the last generation of people on the earth prior to Jesus’ return and his setting up his earth kingdom or 1000-year reign. What? More about that in the future.

Your homework is to think about these signs as you receive news this week.

**First birth pain:      Widespread deception by false Christs (vs 4-5)**

*<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many." (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Second birth pain:    Increase in wars and rumors of wars (vs 6-7)**

*<sup>6</sup> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. <sup>7</sup> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Third birth pain:      Worldwide devastation by famines and earthquakes (vs 7)**

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**Fourth birth pain:    Acceleration of persecution and death of Christians (vs 7-9)**

*<sup>9</sup> Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Fifth birth pain:      A great falling away from Christ (vs 10-12)**

*<sup>10</sup> At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, <sup>11</sup> and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. <sup>12</sup> Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Sixth birth pain:      Worldwide evangelism (vs 13-14)**

*<sup>13</sup> But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

I don't think Jesus' description of the end was intended to make us scared. It would be easy to become paranoid, in one hand is your screen updating the current end time world news, in the other hand is your Bible as you search for answers. Not a bad idea.

Some become alarmed starting in their mind a countdown to the return of Jesus after learning that certain alarming events in global politics are unfolding. Let me give you three suggestions for living confident in Christ as the sand of time runs out in **this hourglass**.

### **1<sup>st</sup> - Reject the temptation to live in fear.**

Jesus words are not meant to scare you into salvation. Although, some may choose to follow Jesus because of the urgency of the hour.

These warnings in Matthew 24, are designed to get the attention of the wayward, or unbeliever who are in danger of entering into eternity with no plan of salvation to save them from eternal judgement.

*So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10-NIV)*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> - Remember that God is Sovereign**

God is sovereign and He is working His End Time plan.

God is not -partly- Sovereign.

God is not -sometimes- Sovereign.

God is not -mostly- Sovereign.

Are you in love and serving the Lord Jesus Christ who is sovereignly in control of all world events, the timing of events, as well as your personal life.

*Our God is in heaven;  
he does whatever pleases him. (Psalm 115:3-NIV)*

Don't let anyone tell you otherwise, it is a part of the End Time deception that is filling the earth and making its way into the church.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> - Become totally dependent on God's word.**

Read it daily. Apply it often. Start to memorize now.

God's inspired and inerrant word of God takes priority over all other reports. News reports can make you fearful and anxious. God's word settles our hearts and removes our anxieties. If you are slipping into a negative perspective about the future; nothing could be further from the truth.

When Jesus Christ comes, he will be the **Savior** of his people and the **Judge** of the unbeliever. Which Jesus do you want to meet? Savior or Judge. You have to make a choice and do it before it is too late.

**Stop looking at the PROBLEMS of this life and start looking at the promises of the NEXT.**

So, whether you are Ready or Not, Jesus is about to return, in the clouds and then on the earth sometime later after the Tribulation. Are you ready? Let me help you be ready with this final prayer I want to offer you today.

If you asked me what is the one thing, I can do to not be deceived, not live in fear and be ready for Jesus' return? Daily ask God for a fresh Holy Spirit impartation. So, why not ask God to that right now. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Father,

I welcome the Holy Spirit's entry into my life. To be with me. To be in me. To overshadow me. For these reasons and so many others, I feel helpless. I feel inadequate.

I feel unworthy to ask for the Holy Spirit to breathe on me. You said I could ask, so Jesus, breathe on me, the way You breathed on Your disciples. *"And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:22-NIV)*

Even though the Holy Spirit defies understanding and comprehension, I welcome the Holy Spirit into all areas of my life. To baptize me. To overshadow me. To refill me. To empower me. To come upon me.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

## What's Going On?

Pastor Ken

April 12, 2026

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line, we have been praying for you! Those who are new to Bethel Life Center or new to the Bible, we are going through Matthew 24-25. We teach right out of Bible at Bethel. Now, with Tax Day this week, April 15, I want to remind you of some words from our Savior about taxes and giving. Look on the screen at this verse,

*<sup>17</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him. (Mark 12:17-NIV)*

Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." I think it is pretty straight forward, be honest about giving to God and be honest about giving to the government. Stop fudging. Stop be untruthful about your giving. Today is good day to start on a path of integrity. Thank you for your giving on-line, text to give, drop it off in the black boxes or mail in. In a minute I will pray over your giving to God.

### **The signs of the end times are to make you cheerful, not fearful.**

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500 years ago, sailors were afraid to travel beyond the horizon. Sail too far and you run the risk of sailing over the edge. Losing life and cargo. So, they reasoned. So, they thought. So, they limited their exploration.

The common wisdom of the day, play it safe and stay away from the **unknown**.

Then a statue was placed at the Strait of Gibraltar, where the Spaniards had dominion over both sides of the straight. This is the narrowest margin, where you can stand in Africa and look across the straight and see Europe.

Near the entrance of the straight, the pillar of Hercules stood, a huge marker bore in its stone the words, in Latin,

**Ne Plus Ultra. No More Beyond.**

Then a Spanish boy played in the ocean. The boy walked along the beach. The boy cast his eyes toward the ocean horizon. The boy put out to sea to learn the trade of the Spanish explorer. Christopher Columbus and his voyage of 1492 entered a new era and entered a new world as he left the shores and the doors of Spain launching travels beyond the horizon.

And beyond the horizon Columbus traveled, where the barrier was broken and so they took the Latin phrase **“No More Beyond,”** and removed the first word and minted Spanish coins with the slogan, **“More Beyond.”**

Every day the world travels beyond the horizon line. You were made by God to explore what is approaching at the end of the age. Remove the **NO** from your future. Open your heart and life to God’s promises of Sovereignty as He is working his End Times Plan.

Yes, God has an End Times clock where sand is slipping through an hourglass.

Now, let me offer a warning about this next sermon series-**What’s Going On**, a study about the End Times. There are some things we will understand clearly, hurray for getting the right answer in class when you go to the chalk board.

But we must also be humble enough to admit some things in our Travelers Guide to the End Times, we will miss entirely. For so many they miss the punch line. The clue phone is ringing, and they fail to answer it. They miss the plot all together. So, what is the plot, pastor?

**The sign of the end times is about HOPE and about HIM.**

Again, the signs of the end times are to make you cheerful, not fearful.

Be careful of falling into the trap of thinking there is a tutorial for everything you want to know about the coming age. Coming Apocalypse. Why not start simple? Something we can all agree upon, whether you are pre-trib or mid-trib. Or post-trib, it will all pan out in the end. These are descriptions of when Jesus will return before or during the 7 years of Tribulation as spelled out in Matthew 24.

Whether you think the Antichrist will be Jewish or Muslim. Whether you have read the book of Daniel or Revelation or not.

We are all headed in the same direction. Each day brings us closer to a final heartbeat. A final breath. A final “I Love You, Danice.”

An airplane gets lost in a storm over the Atlantic Ocean as it flies through the middle of a hurricane. The captain has decided to notify the passengers as to his level of concern, level of threat, so he grabs his intercom and turns it on.

The first words out his mouth are, “the bad news is that we have lost our guidance and radar system, it has gone dark and we have no way to determine **where we are going**, or **what direction we are headed**.”

But cheer up friends, the good news is we are making good time!”

The world is filled with billions of humans making good time, as they wander lost, wander aimlessly with no clue where they are, even more sad, or where they are going.

God’s Word does not leave us with a blank screen or dark radar.

God’s word is our guidance system, and it tells us where we are going. History is not an endless recurrence of reincarnated life cycles. This world will not continue forever through a series of infinite life cycles of history.

God’s word is clear. God has a Sovereign plan that is unfolding before your very eyes. Watch the nightly news or grab your screen and go to your preferred media outlet. News is synced with God’s providence, God’s plan even though the news reporting has no idea it is reporting End Times news. David Muir and the Messiah Jesus are on the same page more than most of us realize.

No one is getting any younger. Death comes to the young, old, perfectly healthy, those hanging on by life support. Death comes to the evil and too the environmentalist. Death comes to the delightful and to the deprived.

Death swallows up the commoner and king, the poor and the prince. So here is my question to go along with my analysis: Since death is inevitable, shouldn’t YOU be making plans for your death and the afterlife?

God’s word suggests as much. Heaven is referred to over 500 times in the Bible. The New Testament mentions Jesus return more than 300 times with 1 out of every 30 verses. There are 27 books in the New Testament and 23 of them refer to Jesus second coming! Equally important is the idea we are told over 50 times in the Bible, “be ready.”

*<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. (2 Peter 3:10-NIV)*

*26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27<sup>a</sup> People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. (Luke 17-NIV)*

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As the disciples ascended to the summit of the Mount of Olives, they glanced back over their shoulders and stared back at Herod's Temple, one the ancient wonders of the world. The gospel of Mark informs us that it was the beauty that caught the disciples attention.

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The disciples were mesmerized by Herod's temple and the sheer size of the stones used to build it. These Galileans had seldom come in contact with such size and strength of architecture. To this day, the Western Wall can still be seen.

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### **Six Signs of Jesus’ Return**

Jesus’ return happens in two stages. **First**, there is the rapture where Jesus will return only in the air as he removes Christians from the earth.

<sup>16</sup> *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* <sup>17</sup> *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4-ESV)*

**Second, Jesus returns** to the physical earth bringing with Christians from heaven to engage the Anti-Christ in an End Time battle called The Battle of Armageddon.

<sup>29</sup> *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* <sup>30</sup> *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:29-30-ESV).*

This battle will take place in the Valley of Megiddo, in Israel. Why this valley? More battles have been fought here than any place in the world.

Regarding the end of the age, the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer 30:7), Jesus gives **6 signs** that would be associated with the last generation of people on the earth prior to Jesus’ return and his setting up his earth kingdom or 1000-year reign. What? More about that in the future.

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**First birth pain:      Widespread deception by false Christs (vs 4-5)**

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*So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
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### **2<sup>nd</sup> - Remember that God is Sovereign**

God is sovereign and He is working His End Time plan.

God is not -partly- Sovereign.

God is not -sometimes- Sovereign.

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Are you in love and serving the Lord Jesus Christ who is sovereignly in control of all world events, the timing of events, as well as your personal life.

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God's inspired and inerrant word of God takes priority over all other reports. News reports can make you fearful and anxious. God's word settles our hearts and removes our anxieties. If you are slipping into a negative perspective about the future; nothing could be further from the truth.

When Jesus Christ comes, he will be the **Savior** of his people and the **Judge** of the unbeliever. Which Jesus do you want to meet? Savior or Judge. You have to make a choice and do it before it is too late.

**Stop looking at the PROBLEMS of this life and start looking at the promises of the NEXT.**

So, whether you are Ready or Not, Jesus is about to return, in the clouds and then on the earth sometime later after the Tribulation. Are you ready? Let me help you be ready with this final prayer I want to offer you today.

If you asked me what is the one thing, I can do to not be deceived, not live in fear and be ready for Jesus' return? Daily ask God for a fresh Holy Spirit impartation. So, why not ask God to that right now. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Father,

I welcome the Holy Spirit's entry into my life. To be with me. To be in me. To overshadow me. For these reasons and so many others, I feel helpless. I feel inadequate.

I feel unworthy to ask for the Holy Spirit to breathe on me. You said I could ask, so Jesus, breathe on me, the way You breathed on Your disciples. *"And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:22-NIV)*

Even though the Holy Spirit defies understanding and comprehension, I welcome the Holy Spirit into all areas of my life. To baptize me. To overshadow me. To refill me. To empower me. To come upon me.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

## What's Going On?

Pastor Ken

April 12, 2026

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line, we have been praying for you! Those who are new to Bethel Life Center or new to the Bible, we are going through Matthew 24-25. We teach right out of Bible at Bethel. Now, with Tax Day this week, April 15, I want to remind you of some words from our Savior about taxes and giving. Look on the screen at this verse,

*<sup>17</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him. (Mark 12:17-NIV)*

Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." I think it is pretty straight forward, be honest about giving to God and be honest about giving to the government. Stop fudging. Stop be untruthful about your giving. Today is good day to start on a path of integrity. Thank you for your giving on-line, text to give, drop it off in the black boxes or mail in. In a minute I will pray over your giving to God.

### **The signs of the end times are to make you cheerful, not fearful.**

*<sup>1</sup> Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. <sup>2</sup> "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." <sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.*

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500 years ago, sailors were afraid to travel beyond the horizon. Sail too far and you run the risk of sailing over the edge. Losing life and cargo. So, they reasoned. So, they thought. So, they limited their exploration.

The common wisdom of the day, play it safe and stay away from the **unknown**.

Then a statue was placed at the Straight of Gibraltar, where the Spaniards had dominion over both sides of the straight. This is the narrowest margin, where you can stand in Africa and look across the straight and see Europe.

Near the entrance of the straight, the pillar of Hercules stood, a huge marker bore in its stone the words, in Latin,

**Ne Plus Ultra. No More Beyond.**

Then a Spanish boy played in the ocean. The boy walked along the beach. The boy cast his eyes toward the ocean horizon. The boy put out to sea to learn the trade of the Spanish explorer. Christopher Columbus and his voyage of 1492 entered a new era and entered a new world as he left the shores and the doors of Spain launching travels beyond the horizon.

And beyond the horizon Columbus traveled, where the barrier was broken and so they took the Latin phrase **“No More Beyond,”** and removed the first word and minted Spanish coins with the slogan, **“More Beyond.”**

Every day the world travels beyond the horizon line. You were made by God to explore what is approaching at the end of the age. Remove the **NO** from your future. Open your heart and life to God’s promises of Sovereignty as He is working his End Times Plan.

Yes, God has an End Times clock where sand is slipping through an hourglass.

Now, let me offer a warning about this next sermon series-**What’s Going On**, a study about the End Times. There are some things we will understand clearly, hurray for getting the right answer in class when you go to the chalk board.

But we must also be humble enough to admit some things in our Travelers Guide to the End Times, we will miss entirely. For so many they miss the punch line. The clue phone is ringing, and they fail to answer it. They miss the plot all together. So, what is the plot, pastor?

**The sign of the end times is about HOPE and about HIM.**

Again, the signs of the end times are to make you cheerful, not fearful.

Be careful of falling into the trap of thinking there is a tutorial for everything you want to know about the coming age. Coming Apocalypse. Why not start simple? Something we can all agree upon, whether you are pre-trib or mid-trib. Or post-trib, it will all pan out in the end. These are descriptions of when Jesus will return before or during the 7 years of Tribulation as spelled out in Matthew 24.

Whether you think the Antichrist will be Jewish or Muslim. Whether you have read the book of Daniel or Revelation or not.

We are all headed in the same direction. Each day brings us closer to a final heartbeat. A final breath. A final “I Love You, Danice.”

An airplane gets lost in a storm over the Atlantic Ocean as it flies through the middle of a hurricane. The captain has decided to notify the passengers as to his level of concern, level of threat, so he grabs his intercom and turns it on.

The first words out his mouth are, “the bad news is that we have lost our guidance and radar system, it has gone dark and we have no way to determine **where we are going**, or **what direction we are headed**.”

But cheer up friends, the good news is we are making good time!”

The world is filled with billions of humans making good time, as they wander lost, wander aimlessly with no clue where they are, even more sad, or where they are going.

God’s Word does not leave us with a blank screen or dark radar.

God’s word is our guidance system, and it tells us where we are going. History is not an endless recurrence of reincarnated life cycles. This world will not continue forever through a series of infinite life cycles of history.

God’s word is clear. God has a Sovereign plan that is unfolding before your very eyes. Watch the nightly news or grab your screen and go to your preferred media outlet. News is synced with God’s providence, God’s plan even though the news reporting has no idea it is reporting End Times news. David Muir and the Messiah Jesus are on the same page more than most of us realize.

No one is getting any younger. Death comes to the young, old, perfectly healthy, those hanging on by life support. Death comes to the evil and too the environmentalist. Death comes to the delightful and to the deprived.

Death swallows up the commoner and king, the poor and the prince. So here is my question to go along with my analysis: Since death is inevitable, shouldn’t YOU be making plans for your death and the afterlife?

God’s word suggests as much. Heaven is referred to over 500 times in the Bible. The New Testament mentions Jesus return more than 300 times with 1 out of every 30 verses. There are 27 books in the New Testament and 23 of them refer to Jesus second coming! Equally important is the idea we are told over 50 times in the Bible, “be ready.”

*<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. (2 Peter 3:10-NIV)*

*26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27<sup>a</sup> People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. (Luke 17-NIV)*

Danice and I have 1 beauty and 3 beasts. Kenny was born in San Diego, and Rebekah (Chewbeka), Jesse and Joseph were born in Everett, Washington. I too grew up in Everett, Washington. The home of the original Boeing Plant.

When Kenny came along, we had been married about 2 years, and served as the college Pastors in San Diego, California. We had no family in the area and so the pregnancy journey for this transplanted Texas family was not only new, but it was also by ourselves.

The joy of being new parents was thrilling. We went to doctor appointments together. We were excited but also anxious at the same time. Danice and I traveled the pregnancy road together.

In the **Travelers Guide** for first time parents there was early pregnancy sickness and suggestions to take La Mas classes. We read all pregnancy literature we could get our hands on and asked all kinds of questions about having a baby.

We moved from an apartment to larger house making room for an expanding family. Then one day, preborn little Kenny made himself known. A kick here, a bump there. I had to put my hand on Danice's belly to feel the kick myself. Life was growing. Now, Danice had to be concerned about diet, strenuous exercise and getting some extra rest. Then we finally arrived at the last month of pregnancy. The 9<sup>th</sup> month, it was December and still sunny and warm in San Diego.

One evening Danice and I were eating in our favorite Mexican restaurant just a couple of weeks before Kenny was to arrive, and surprisingly we saw Danice's, baby doctor in the same Mexican restaurant. We tried to hide behind the menus. We positioned our chairs to not look at him. If we had one of those big nose and black mustache props, we would have put it on.

Then the moment of truth, as doc was leaving, he strolled past our table, greeted us, asked how Danice she was doing, and said, "you and the baby will feel that those enchilada's tomorrow." Our responsibility was to get ready for delivery, be patient, not live with anxiety. We were to cast off fear and lower the RPMs of apprehension because we were under good care by the that doctor and Grossmont Hospital.

By now, some moms listening to this are cringing, smiling or wondering how **did the delivery go?** Like many couples we made a false run to the hospital thinking it was time to have the baby. The doctor was sweet, when he announced those were **only** Braxton's hicks and not birth pains, we were deeply disappointed. We were positively sure we had read the signs correctly.

That day, sadly we retreated to our home and settled in for more waiting. More waiting and wondering. More waiting and working. More waiting and watching.

You would have thought that living in San Diego, walking along the beach and taking in the Mediterranean sun would have somehow added relief and comfort. It did not and Danice was growing increasingly nervous, frustrated and ready to have that baby.

I did not help the matters by adding my unfiltered humor, “there she blows,” I would say. Ouch! Sometimes I would waddle around the house, providing some identificational compassion, although Danice did not see it that way.

One of the great biblical illustrations that Jesus is about to return is the **future approaching birth pains that go with delivery.**

**As a baby is about to be born, even us men know  
that labor pains increase as the delivery draws near.**

It is a time of great hope and new possibilities. I am talking about Jesus’ return and the birth pains indicating the soon arrival of a new baby.

It can also be a time of great fear and anxiety. Again, I am talking about Jesus’ return and the birth pains indicating the soon arrival of a new baby.

Just as the medical profession has spelled out the stages, signs and descriptive elements connected to the birthing journey, complete with details about birth pains, God’s word uses the metaphor of **birth pains** to illustrate that Jesus return is Coming Soon.

So here is my question for you. Is the world experiencing the beginning of birth pains, indicating Jesus Soon Return?

Jesus thinks so, and that was the basis of his teaching in Matthew 24-25, over 2000 years ago. These chapters are Jesus own prophetic predictions about the future.

*<sup>8</sup>All these are the beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

Ok, I need to quit wasting valuable time, the clock is ticking and the sand is pouring. Some of you have been watching the hourglass, and asking yourself, how long will it take for that sand to run out?

Others are thinking I might keep preaching until the sand runs completely out. I am tempted. This is a 4-hour, hourglass. Yes, I am tempted to preach today until the sand runs out, as they say.

There are 3 major biblical passages that spells out God's Sovereign plan for End Time events. The books that contain the essential keys to understanding the future are:

(1) Daniel

(2) Revelation

(3) Matthew, with its Olivet Discourse taught in Matthew 24 and 25.

We will be going through these chapters looking closely at the message Jesus gave to his disciples during the final week of his life. Matthew 24 is Jesus' final sermon about the End Times that he preached from the Mount of Olives.

This sermon is found in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. The sermon was given to only 4 of Jesus disciples. The sermon was Jesus' response to the question, when will come the end come?

*<sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup> "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?" (Mark 13-NIV)*

The tutorial that Peter, James, John and Andrew received was an intimate setting that spelled out an eschatological blueprint of the End Times!

Jesus is talking about the tribulation-seven years of terrible life destroying troubles, which will soon come to pass. The tribulation will be a 7-year season of struggle for all people, Christians and non-Christians. **But especially those who resist Satan.** In the end, those who align with Satan will get their due.

Did you know that God has provided a map for us? Here is one of many that you can look at see the BIG PICTURE. Again, there are some disagreements about the order and some of the actual events, nobody has an airtight forecast of the future. Here is a timeline spelled out in the book, *What Happens Next* by Max Lucado.

This may be shocking, but even Jesus doesn't even know some of the timing. It is beyond his clearance protocol.

*But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (Matthew 24:36-NIV)*

Notice who authored those words-Matthew. One of Jesus followers. **Question.** Since this material was so important, why wasn't Matthew there to take notes that day? If he was to be the eventual author inspired by the Holy Spirit, and if the material was so important you don't want to get it wrong, what was Matthew doing that day on the Mount of Olives?

Again, God is the one who makes the call in all kinds of matters of our lives, he alone has his reasons and Sovereign plan. Matthew the tax collector tells us Jesus has been teaching all day in the temple.

In Matthew 23, he has been delivering some of his harshest sermons before the religious brainiacs. Some of Israel's most zealous do-gooders. Let me offer just the first of 7 woes.

*<sup>13</sup> Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. (Matthew 23-NIV)*

As Jesus is leaving the temple grounds, for the last time the disciples are awestruck by Herod's Temple. They literally walk right past it. Jesus public teaching is now over. It was an emotional and tragic moment, the harshness of the message and the finality of the location.

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When Jesus Christ comes, he will be the **Savior** of his people and the **Judge** of the unbeliever. Which Jesus do you want to meet? Savior or Judge. You have to make a choice and do it before it is too late.

**Stop looking at the PROBLEMS of this life and start looking at the promises of the NEXT.**

So, whether you are Ready or Not, Jesus is about to return, in the clouds and then on the earth sometime later after the Tribulation. Are you ready? Let me help you be ready with this final prayer I want to offer you today.

If you asked me what is the one thing, I can do to not be deceived, not live in fear and be ready for Jesus' return? Daily ask God for a fresh Holy Spirit impartation. So, why not ask God to that right now. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Father,

I welcome the Holy Spirit's entry into my life. To be with me. To be in me. To overshadow me. For these reasons and so many others, I feel helpless. I feel inadequate.

I feel unworthy to ask for the Holy Spirit to breathe on me. You said I could ask, so Jesus, breathe on me, the way You breathed on Your disciples. *"And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:22-NIV)*

Even though the Holy Spirit defies understanding and comprehension, I welcome the Holy Spirit into all areas of my life. To baptize me. To overshadow me. To refill me. To empower me. To come upon me.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

## What's Going On?

Pastor Ken

April 12, 2026

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line, we have been praying for you! Those who are new to Bethel Life Center or new to the Bible, we are going through Matthew 24-25. We teach right out of Bible at Bethel. Now, with Tax Day this week, April 15, I want to remind you of some words from our Savior about taxes and giving. Look on the screen at this verse,

*<sup>17</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him. (Mark 12:17-NIV)*

Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." I think it is pretty straight forward, be honest about giving to God and be honest about giving to the government. Stop fudging. Stop be untruthful about your giving. Today is good day to start on a path of integrity. Thank you for your giving on-line, text to give, drop it off in the black boxes or mail in. In a minute I will pray over your giving to God.

### **The signs of the end times are to make you cheerful, not fearful.**

*<sup>1</sup> Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. <sup>2</sup> "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." <sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.*

*<sup>7</sup> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of birth pains." (Matthew 24-NIV)*

500 years ago, sailors were afraid to travel beyond the horizon. Sail too far and you run the risk of sailing over the edge. Losing life and cargo. So, they reasoned. So, they thought. So, they limited their exploration.

The common wisdom of the day, play it safe and stay away from the **unknown**.

Then a statue was placed at the Straight of Gibraltar, where the Spaniards had dominion over both sides of the straight. This is the narrowest margin, where you can stand in Africa and look across the straight and see Europe.

Near the entrance of the straight, the pillar of Hercules stood, a huge marker bore in its stone the words, in Latin,

**Ne Plus Ultra. No More Beyond.**

Then a Spanish boy played in the ocean. The boy walked along the beach. The boy cast his eyes toward the ocean horizon. The boy put out to sea to learn the trade of the Spanish explorer. Christopher Columbus and his voyage of 1492 entered a new era and entered a new world as he left the shores and the doors of Spain launching travels beyond the horizon.

And beyond the horizon Columbus traveled, where the barrier was broken and so they took the Latin phrase **“No More Beyond,”** and removed the first word and minted Spanish coins with the slogan, **“More Beyond.”**

Every day the world travels beyond the horizon line. You were made by God to explore what is approaching at the end of the age. Remove the **NO** from your future. Open your heart and life to God’s promises of Sovereignty as He is working his End Times Plan.

Yes, God has an End Times clock where sand is slipping through an hourglass.

Now, let me offer a warning about this next sermon series-**What’s Going On**, a study about the End Times. There are some things we will understand clearly, hurray for getting the right answer in class when you go to the chalk board.

But we must also be humble enough to admit some things in our Travelers Guide to the End Times, we will miss entirely. For so many they miss the punch line. The clue phone is ringing, and they fail to answer it. They miss the plot all together. So, what is the plot, pastor?

**The sign of the end times is about HOPE and about HIM.**

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Be careful of falling into the trap of thinking there is a tutorial for everything you want to know about the coming age. Coming Apocalypse. Why not start simple? Something we can all agree upon, whether you are pre-trib or mid-trib. Or post-trib, it will all pan out in the end. These are descriptions of when Jesus will return before or during the 7 years of Tribulation as spelled out in Matthew 24.

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An airplane gets lost in a storm over the Atlantic Ocean as it flies through the middle of a hurricane. The captain has decided to notify the passengers as to his level of concern, level of threat, so he grabs his intercom and turns it on.

The first words out his mouth are, “the bad news is that we have lost our guidance and radar system, it has gone dark and we have no way to determine **where we are going**, or **what direction we are headed**.”

But cheer up friends, the good news is we are making good time!”

The world is filled with billions of humans making good time, as they wander lost, wander aimlessly with no clue where they are, even more sad, or where they are going.

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God’s word is our guidance system, and it tells us where we are going. History is not an endless recurrence of reincarnated life cycles. This world will not continue forever through a series of infinite life cycles of history.

God’s word is clear. God has a Sovereign plan that is unfolding before your very eyes. Watch the nightly news or grab your screen and go to your preferred media outlet. News is synced with God’s providence, God’s plan even though the news reporting has no idea it is reporting End Times news. David Muir and the Messiah Jesus are on the same page more than most of us realize.

No one is getting any younger. Death comes to the young, old, perfectly healthy, those hanging on by life support. Death comes to the evil and too the environmentalist. Death comes to the delightful and to the deprived.

Death swallows up the commoner and king, the poor and the prince. So here is my question to go along with my analysis: Since death is inevitable, shouldn’t YOU be making plans for your death and the afterlife?

God’s word suggests as much. Heaven is referred to over 500 times in the Bible. The New Testament mentions Jesus return more than 300 times with 1 out of every 30 verses. There are 27 books in the New Testament and 23 of them refer to Jesus second coming! Equally important is the idea we are told over 50 times in the Bible, “be ready.”

*<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. (2 Peter 3:10-NIV)*

*26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27<sup>a</sup> People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. (Luke 17-NIV)*

Danice and I have 1 beauty and 3 beasts. Kenny was born in San Diego, and Rebekah (Chewbeka), Jesse and Joseph were born in Everett, Washington. I too grew up in Everett, Washington. The home of the original Boeing Plant.

When Kenny came along, we had been married about 2 years, and served as the college Pastors in San Diego, California. We had no family in the area and so the pregnancy journey for this transplanted Texas family was not only new, but it was also by ourselves.

The joy of being new parents was thrilling. We went to doctor appointments together. We were excited but also anxious at the same time. Danice and I traveled the pregnancy road together.

In the **Travelers Guide** for first time parents there was early pregnancy sickness and suggestions to take La Mas classes. We read all pregnancy literature we could get our hands on and asked all kinds of questions about having a baby.

We moved from an apartment to larger house making room for an expanding family. Then one day, preborn little Kenny made himself known. A kick here, a bump there. I had to put my hand on Danice's belly to feel the kick myself. Life was growing. Now, Danice had to be concerned about diet, strenuous exercise and getting some extra rest. Then we finally arrived at the last month of pregnancy. The 9<sup>th</sup> month, it was December and still sunny and warm in San Diego.

One evening Danice and I were eating in our favorite Mexican restaurant just a couple of weeks before Kenny was to arrive, and surprisingly we saw Danice's, baby doctor in the same Mexican restaurant. We tried to hide behind the menus. We positioned our chairs to not look at him. If we had one of those big nose and black mustache props, we would have put it on.

Then the moment of truth, as doc was leaving, he strolled past our table, greeted us, asked how Danice she was doing, and said, "you and the baby will feel that those enchilada's tomorrow." Our responsibility was to get ready for delivery, be patient, not live with anxiety. We were to cast off fear and lower the RPMs of apprehension because we were under good care by the that doctor and Grossmont Hospital.

By now, some moms listening to this are cringing, smiling or wondering how **did the delivery go?** Like many couples we made a false run to the hospital thinking it was time to have the baby. The doctor was sweet, when he announced those were **only** Braxton's hicks and not birth pains, we were deeply disappointed. We were positively sure we had read the signs correctly.

That day, sadly we retreated to our home and settled in for more waiting. More waiting and wondering. More waiting and working. More waiting and watching.

You would have thought that living in San Diego, walking along the beach and taking in the Mediterranean sun would have somehow added relief and comfort. It did not and Danice was growing increasingly nervous, frustrated and ready to have that baby.

I did not help the matters by adding my unfiltered humor, “there she blows,” I would say. Ouch! Sometimes I would waddle around the house, providing some identificational compassion, although Danice did not see it that way.

One of the great biblical illustrations that Jesus is about to return is the **future approaching birth pains that go with delivery.**

**As a baby is about to be born, even us men know  
that labor pains increase as the delivery draws near.**

It is a time of great hope and new possibilities. I am talking about Jesus’ return and the birth pains indicating the soon arrival of a new baby.

It can also be a time of great fear and anxiety. Again, I am talking about Jesus’ return and the birth pains indicating the soon arrival of a new baby.

Just as the medical profession has spelled out the stages, signs and descriptive elements connected to the birthing journey, complete with details about birth pains, God’s word uses the metaphor of **birth pains** to illustrate that Jesus return is Coming Soon.

So here is my question for you. Is the world experiencing the beginning of birth pains, indicating Jesus Soon Return?

Jesus thinks so, and that was the basis of his teaching in Matthew 24-25, over 2000 years ago. These chapters are Jesus own prophetic predictions about the future.

*<sup>8</sup>All these are the beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

Ok, I need to quit wasting valuable time, the clock is ticking and the sand is pouring. Some of you have been watching the hourglass, and asking yourself, how long will it take for that sand to run out?

Others are thinking I might keep preaching until the sand runs completely out. I am tempted. This is a 4-hour, hourglass. Yes, I am tempted to preach today until the sand runs out, as they say.

There are 3 major biblical passages that spells out God's Sovereign plan for End Time events. The books that contain the essential keys to understanding the future are:

(1) Daniel

(2) Revelation

(3) Matthew, with its Olivet Discourse taught in Matthew 24 and 25.

We will be going through these chapters looking closely at the message Jesus gave to his disciples during the final week of his life. Matthew 24 is Jesus' final sermon about the End Times that he preached from the Mount of Olives.

This sermon is found in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. The sermon was given to only 4 of Jesus disciples. The sermon was Jesus' response to the question, when will come the end come?

*<sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup> "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?" (Mark 13-NIV)*

The tutorial that Peter, James, John and Andrew received was an intimate setting that spelled out an eschatological blueprint of the End Times!

Jesus is talking about the tribulation-seven years of terrible life destroying troubles, which will soon come to pass. The tribulation will be a 7-year season of struggle for all people, Christians and non-Christians. **But especially those who resist Satan.** In the end, those who align with Satan will get their due.

Did you know that God has provided a map for us? Here is one of many that you can look at see the BIG PICTURE. Again, there are some disagreements about the order and some of the actual events, nobody has an airtight forecast of the future. Here is a timeline spelled out in the book, *What Happens Next* by Max Lucado.

This may be shocking, but even Jesus doesn't even know some of the timing. It is beyond his clearance protocol.

*But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (Matthew 24:36-NIV)*

Notice who authored those words-Matthew. One of Jesus followers. **Question.** Since this material was so important, why wasn't Matthew there to take notes that day? If he was to be the eventual author inspired by the Holy Spirit, and if the material was so important you don't want to get it wrong, what was Matthew doing that day on the Mount of Olives?

Again, God is the one who makes the call in all kinds of matters of our lives, he alone has his reasons and Sovereign plan. Matthew the tax collector tells us Jesus has been teaching all day in the temple.

In Matthew 23, he has been delivering some of his harshest sermons before the religious brainiacs. Some of Israel's most zealous do-gooders. Let me offer just the first of 7 woes.

*<sup>13</sup> Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. (Matthew 23-NIV)*

As Jesus is leaving the temple grounds, for the last time the disciples are awestruck by Herod's Temple. They literally walk right past it. Jesus public teaching is now over. It was an emotional and tragic moment, the harshness of the message and the finality of the location.

*<sup>1</sup> Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

After Jesus gave his heated and forceful warnings to the Scribes and Pharisees the disciples left the temple and descended into the Kidron valley and started up the hill called the Mount of Olives.

With Jerusalem packed with tourists, the only lodging available was in nearby Bethany where Jesus had stayed many times with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. A two-mile journey to the home of some friends.

As the disciples ascended to the summit of the Mount of Olives, they glanced back over their shoulders and stared back at Herod's Temple, one the ancient wonders of the world. The gospel of Mark informs us that it was the beauty that caught the disciples attention.

*As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" (Mark 13:1-NIV)*

The disciples were mesmerized by Herod's temple and the sheer size of the stones used to build it. These Galileans had seldom come in contact with such size and strength of architecture. To this day, the Western Wall can still be seen.

In fact, you can get on a video cam and go to the Western Wall. You can put a prayer request into the Western Wall. In response to the disciple's admiration for Herod's temple and its man-made splendor, Jesus replied,"

<sup>2</sup> “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” <sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us, “they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24-NIV)

Jesus surprising response to their child like enthusiasm caught the disciples by surprise. Jesus’ course corrects the disciple’s fixation with buildings and directs them to more important matters than their obsession with the opulent.

That day on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sets forth before disciples the events that would take place in the future, just before his return to earth. Jesus does this in the literary outline I am calling:

### **Six Signs of Jesus’ Return**

Jesus’ return happens in two stages. **First**, there is the rapture where Jesus will return only in the air as he removes Christians from the earth.

<sup>16</sup> *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* <sup>17</sup> *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4-ESV)*

**Second, Jesus returns** to the physical earth bringing with Christians from heaven to engage the Anti-Christ in an End Time battle called The Battle of Armageddon.

<sup>29</sup> *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* <sup>30</sup> *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:29-30-ESV).*

This battle will take place in the Valley of Megiddo, in Israel. Why this valley? More battles have been fought here than any place in the world.

Regarding the end of the age, the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer 30:7), Jesus gives **6 signs** that would be associated with the last generation of people on the earth prior to Jesus’ return and his setting up his earth kingdom or 1000-year reign. What? More about that in the future.

Your homework is to think about these signs as you receive news this week.

**First birth pain:      **Widespread deception by false Christs (vs 4-5)****

*<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many." (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Second birth pain:      **Increase in wars and rumors of wars (vs 6-7)****

*<sup>6</sup> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. <sup>7</sup> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Third birth pain:      **Worldwide devastation by famines and earthquakes (vs 7)****

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**Fourth birth pain:      **Acceleration of persecution and death of Christians (vs 7-9)****

*<sup>9</sup> Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Fifth birth pain:      **A great falling away from Christ (vs 10-12)****

*<sup>10</sup> At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, <sup>11</sup> and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. <sup>12</sup> Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Sixth birth pain:      **Worldwide evangelism (vs 13-14)****

*<sup>13</sup> But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

I don't think Jesus' description of the end was intended to make us scared. It would be easy to become paranoid, in one hand is your screen updating the current end time world news, in the other hand is your Bible as you search for answers. Not a bad idea.

Some become alarmed starting in their mind a countdown to the return of Jesus after learning that certain alarming events in global politics are unfolding. Let me give you three suggestions for living confident in Christ as the sand of time runs out in **this hourglass**.

### **1<sup>st</sup> - Reject the temptation to live in fear.**

Jesus words are not meant to scare you into salvation. Although, some may choose to follow Jesus because of the urgency of the hour.

These warnings in Matthew 24, are designed to get the attention of the wayward, or unbeliever who are in danger of entering into eternity with no plan of salvation to save them from eternal judgement.

*So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10-NIV)*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> - Remember that God is Sovereign**

God is sovereign and He is working His End Time plan.

God is not -partly- Sovereign.

God is not -sometimes- Sovereign.

God is not -mostly- Sovereign.

Are you in love and serving the Lord Jesus Christ who is sovereignly in control of all world events, the timing of events, as well as your personal life.

*Our God is in heaven;  
he does whatever pleases him. (Psalm 115:3-NIV)*

Don't let anyone tell you otherwise, it is a part of the End Time deception that is filling the earth and making its way into the church.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> - Become totally dependent on God's word.**

Read it daily. Apply it often. Start to memorize now.

God's inspired and inerrant word of God takes priority over all other reports. News reports can make you fearful and anxious. God's word settles our hearts and removes our anxieties. If you are slipping into a negative perspective about the future; nothing could be further from the truth.

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*But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (Matthew 24:36-NIV)*

Notice who authored those words-Matthew. One of Jesus followers. **Question.** Since this material was so important, why wasn't Matthew there to take notes that day? If he was to be the eventual author inspired by the Holy Spirit, and if the material was so important you don't want to get it wrong, what was Matthew doing that day on the Mount of Olives?

Again, God is the one who makes the call in all kinds of matters of our lives, he alone has his reasons and Sovereign plan. Matthew the tax collector tells us Jesus has been teaching all day in the temple.

In Matthew 23, he has been delivering some of his harshest sermons before the religious brainiacs. Some of Israel's most zealous do-gooders. Let me offer just the first of 7 woes.

*<sup>13</sup> Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. (Matthew 23-NIV)*

As Jesus is leaving the temple grounds, for the last time the disciples are awestruck by Herod's Temple. They literally walk right past it. Jesus public teaching is now over. It was an emotional and tragic moment, the harshness of the message and the finality of the location.

*<sup>1</sup> Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

After Jesus gave his heated and forceful warnings to the Scribes and Pharisees the disciples left the temple and descended into the Kidron valley and started up the hill called the Mount of Olives.

With Jerusalem packed with tourists, the only lodging available was in nearby Bethany where Jesus had stayed many times with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. A two-mile journey to the home of some friends.

As the disciples ascended to the summit of the Mount of Olives, they glanced back over their shoulders and stared back at Herod's Temple, one the ancient wonders of the world. The gospel of Mark informs us that it was the beauty that caught the disciples attention.

*As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" (Mark 13:1-NIV)*

The disciples were mesmerized by Herod's temple and the sheer size of the stones used to build it. These Galileans had seldom come in contact with such size and strength of architecture. To this day, the Western Wall can still be seen.

In fact, you can get on a video cam and go to the Western Wall. You can put a prayer request into the Western Wall. In response to the disciple's admiration for Herod's temple and its man-made splendor, Jesus replied,"

<sup>2</sup> “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” <sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us, “they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24-NIV)

Jesus surprising response to their child like enthusiasm caught the disciples by surprise. Jesus’ course corrects the disciple’s fixation with buildings and directs them to more important matters than their obsession with the opulent.

That day on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sets forth before disciples the events that would take place in the future, just before his return to earth. Jesus does this in the literary outline I am calling:

### **Six Signs of Jesus’ Return**

Jesus’ return happens in two stages. **First**, there is the rapture where Jesus will return only in the air as he removes Christians from the earth.

<sup>16</sup> *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* <sup>17</sup> *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4-ESV)*

**Second, Jesus returns** to the physical earth bringing with Christians from heaven to engage the Anti-Christ in an End Time battle called The Battle of Armageddon.

<sup>29</sup> *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* <sup>30</sup> *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:29-30-ESV).*

This battle will take place in the Valley of Megiddo, in Israel. Why this valley? More battles have been fought here than any place in the world.

Regarding the end of the age, the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer 30:7), Jesus gives **6 signs** that would be associated with the last generation of people on the earth prior to Jesus’ return and his setting up his earth kingdom or 1000-year reign. What? More about that in the future.

Your homework is to think about these signs as you receive news this week.

**First birth pain:      Widespread deception by false Christs (vs 4-5)**

*<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many." (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Second birth pain:    Increase in wars and rumors of wars (vs 6-7)**

*<sup>6</sup> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. <sup>7</sup> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Third birth pain:      Worldwide devastation by famines and earthquakes (vs 7)**

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**Fourth birth pain:    Acceleration of persecution and death of Christians (vs 7-9)**

*<sup>9</sup> Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Fifth birth pain:      A great falling away from Christ (vs 10-12)**

*<sup>10</sup> At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, <sup>11</sup> and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. <sup>12</sup> Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Sixth birth pain:      Worldwide evangelism (vs 13-14)**

*<sup>13</sup> But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

I don't think Jesus' description of the end was intended to make us scared. It would be easy to become paranoid, in one hand is your screen updating the current end time world news, in the other hand is your Bible as you search for answers. Not a bad idea.

Some become alarmed starting in their mind a countdown to the return of Jesus after learning that certain alarming events in global politics are unfolding. Let me give you three suggestions for living confident in Christ as the sand of time runs out in **this hourglass**.

### **1<sup>st</sup> - Reject the temptation to live in fear.**

Jesus words are not meant to scare you into salvation. Although, some may choose to follow Jesus because of the urgency of the hour.

These warnings in Matthew 24, are designed to get the attention of the wayward, or unbeliever who are in danger of entering into eternity with no plan of salvation to save them from eternal judgement.

*So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10-NIV)*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> - Remember that God is Sovereign**

God is sovereign and He is working His End Time plan.

God is not -partly- Sovereign.

God is not -sometimes- Sovereign.

God is not -mostly- Sovereign.

Are you in love and serving the Lord Jesus Christ who is sovereignly in control of all world events, the timing of events, as well as your personal life.

*Our God is in heaven;  
he does whatever pleases him. (Psalm 115:3-NIV)*

Don't let anyone tell you otherwise, it is a part of the End Time deception that is filling the earth and making its way into the church.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> - Become totally dependent on God's word.**

Read it daily. Apply it often. Start to memorize now.

God's inspired and inerrant word of God takes priority over all other reports. News reports can make you fearful and anxious. God's word settles our hearts and removes our anxieties. If you are slipping into a negative perspective about the future; nothing could be further from the truth.

When Jesus Christ comes, he will be the **Savior** of his people and the **Judge** of the unbeliever. Which Jesus do you want to meet? Savior or Judge. You have to make a choice and do it before it is too late.

**Stop looking at the PROBLEMS of this life and start looking at the promises of the NEXT.**

So, whether you are Ready or Not, Jesus is about to return, in the clouds and then on the earth sometime later after the Tribulation. Are you ready? Let me help you be ready with this final prayer I want to offer you today.

If you asked me what is the one thing, I can do to not be deceived, not live in fear and be ready for Jesus' return? Daily ask God for a fresh Holy Spirit impartation. So, why not ask God to that right now. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Father,

I welcome the Holy Spirit's entry into my life. To be with me. To be in me. To overshadow me. For these reasons and so many others, I feel helpless. I feel inadequate.

I feel unworthy to ask for the Holy Spirit to breathe on me. You said I could ask, so Jesus, breathe on me, the way You breathed on Your disciples. *"And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:22-NIV)*

Even though the Holy Spirit defies understanding and comprehension, I welcome the Holy Spirit into all areas of my life. To baptize me. To overshadow me. To refill me. To empower me. To come upon me.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

## What's Going On?

Pastor Ken

April 12, 2026

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line, we have been praying for you! Those who are new to Bethel Life Center or new to the Bible, we are going through Matthew 24-25. We teach right out of Bible at Bethel. Now, with Tax Day this week, April 15, I want to remind you of some words from our Savior about taxes and giving. Look on the screen at this verse,

*<sup>17</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him. (Mark 12:17-NIV)*

Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." I think it is pretty straight forward, be honest about giving to God and be honest about giving to the government. Stop fudging. Stop be untruthful about your giving. Today is good day to start on a path of integrity. Thank you for your giving on-line, text to give, drop it off in the black boxes or mail in. In a minute I will pray over your giving to God.

### **The signs of the end times are to make you cheerful, not fearful.**

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500 years ago, sailors were afraid to travel beyond the horizon. Sail too far and you run the risk of sailing over the edge. Losing life and cargo. So, they reasoned. So, they thought. So, they limited their exploration.

The common wisdom of the day, play it safe and stay away from the **unknown**.

Then a statue was placed at the Straight of Gibraltar, where the Spaniards had dominion over both sides of the straight. This is the narrowest margin, where you can stand in Africa and look across the straight and see Europe.

Near the entrance of the straight, the pillar of Hercules stood, a huge marker bore in its stone the words, in Latin,

**Ne Plus Ultra. No More Beyond.**

Then a Spanish boy played in the ocean. The boy walked along the beach. The boy cast his eyes toward the ocean horizon. The boy put out to sea to learn the trade of the Spanish explorer. Christopher Columbus and his voyage of 1492 entered a new era and entered a new world as he left the shores and the doors of Spain launching travels beyond the horizon.

And beyond the horizon Columbus traveled, where the barrier was broken and so they took the Latin phrase **“No More Beyond,”** and removed the first word and minted Spanish coins with the slogan, **“More Beyond.”**

Every day the world travels beyond the horizon line. You were made by God to explore what is approaching at the end of the age. Remove the **NO** from your future. Open your heart and life to God’s promises of Sovereignty as He is working his End Times Plan.

Yes, God has an End Times clock where sand is slipping through an hourglass.

Now, let me offer a warning about this next sermon series-**What’s Going On**, a study about the End Times. There are some things we will understand clearly, hurray for getting the right answer in class when you go to the chalk board.

But we must also be humble enough to admit some things in our Travelers Guide to the End Times, we will miss entirely. For so many they miss the punch line. The clue phone is ringing, and they fail to answer it. They miss the plot all together. So, what is the plot, pastor?

**The sign of the end times is about HOPE and about HIM.**

Again, the signs of the end times are to make you cheerful, not fearful.

Be careful of falling into the trap of thinking there is a tutorial for everything you want to know about the coming age. Coming Apocalypse. Why not start simple? Something we can all agree upon, whether you are pre-trib or mid-trib. Or post-trib, it will all pan out in the end. These are descriptions of when Jesus will return before or during the 7 years of Tribulation as spelled out in Matthew 24.

Whether you think the Antichrist will be Jewish or Muslim. Whether you have read the book of Daniel or Revelation or not.

We are all headed in the same direction. Each day brings us closer to a final heartbeat. A final breath. A final “I Love You, Danice.”

An airplane gets lost in a storm over the Atlantic Ocean as it flies through the middle of a hurricane. The captain has decided to notify the passengers as to his level of concern, level of threat, so he grabs his intercom and turns it on.

The first words out his mouth are, “the bad news is that we have lost our guidance and radar system, it has gone dark and we have no way to determine **where we are going**, or **what direction we are headed**.

But cheer up friends, the good news is we are making good time!”

The world is filled with billions of humans making good time, as they wander lost, wander aimlessly with no clue where they are, even more sad, or where they are going.

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As the disciples ascended to the summit of the Mount of Olives, they glanced back over their shoulders and stared back at Herod's Temple, one the ancient wonders of the world. The gospel of Mark informs us that it was the beauty that caught the disciples attention.

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In fact, you can get on a video cam and go to the Western Wall. You can put a prayer request into the Western Wall. In response to the disciple's admiration for Herod's temple and its man-made splendor, Jesus replied,"

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Jesus’ return happens in two stages. **First**, there is the rapture where Jesus will return only in the air as he removes Christians from the earth.

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**Second, Jesus returns** to the physical earth bringing with Christians from heaven to engage the Anti-Christ in an End Time battle called The Battle of Armageddon.

<sup>29</sup> *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* <sup>30</sup> *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:29-30-ESV).*

This battle will take place in the Valley of Megiddo, in Israel. Why this valley? More battles have been fought here than any place in the world.

Regarding the end of the age, the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer 30:7), Jesus gives **6 signs** that would be associated with the last generation of people on the earth prior to Jesus’ return and his setting up his earth kingdom or 1000-year reign. What? More about that in the future.

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**First birth pain:      Widespread deception by false Christs (vs 4-5)**

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Some become alarmed starting in their mind a countdown to the return of Jesus after learning that certain alarming events in global politics are unfolding. Let me give you three suggestions for living confident in Christ as the sand of time runs out in **this hourglass**.

### **1<sup>st</sup> - Reject the temptation to live in fear.**

Jesus words are not meant to scare you into salvation. Although, some may choose to follow Jesus because of the urgency of the hour.

These warnings in Matthew 24, are designed to get the attention of the wayward, or unbeliever who are in danger of entering into eternity with no plan of salvation to save them from eternal judgement.

*So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10-NIV)*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> - Remember that God is Sovereign**

God is sovereign and He is working His End Time plan.

God is not -partly- Sovereign.

God is not -sometimes- Sovereign.

God is not -mostly- Sovereign.

Are you in love and serving the Lord Jesus Christ who is sovereignly in control of all world events, the timing of events, as well as your personal life.

*Our God is in heaven;  
he does whatever pleases him. (Psalm 115:3-NIV)*

Don't let anyone tell you otherwise, it is a part of the End Time deception that is filling the earth and making its way into the church.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> - Become totally dependent on God's word.**

Read it daily. Apply it often. Start to memorize now.

God's inspired and inerrant word of God takes priority over all other reports. News reports can make you fearful and anxious. God's word settles our hearts and removes our anxieties. If you are slipping into a negative perspective about the future; nothing could be further from the truth.

When Jesus Christ comes, he will be the **Savior** of his people and the **Judge** of the unbeliever. Which Jesus do you want to meet? Savior or Judge. You have to make a choice and do it before it is too late.

**Stop looking at the PROBLEMS of this life and start looking at the promises of the NEXT.**

So, whether you are Ready or Not, Jesus is about to return, in the clouds and then on the earth sometime later after the Tribulation. Are you ready? Let me help you be ready with this final prayer I want to offer you today.

If you asked me what is the one thing, I can do to not be deceived, not live in fear and be ready for Jesus' return? Daily ask God for a fresh Holy Spirit impartation. So, why not ask God to that right now. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Father,

I welcome the Holy Spirit's entry into my life. To be with me. To be in me. To overshadow me. For these reasons and so many others, I feel helpless. I feel inadequate.

I feel unworthy to ask for the Holy Spirit to breathe on me. You said I could ask, so Jesus, breathe on me, the way You breathed on Your disciples. *"And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:22-NIV)*

Even though the Holy Spirit defies understanding and comprehension, I welcome the Holy Spirit into all areas of my life. To baptize me. To overshadow me. To refill me. To empower me. To come upon me.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

## What's Going On?

Pastor Ken

April 12, 2026

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line, we have been praying for you! Those who are new to Bethel Life Center or new to the Bible, we are going through Matthew 24-25. We teach right out of Bible at Bethel. Now, with Tax Day this week, April 15, I want to remind you of some words from our Savior about taxes and giving. Look on the screen at this verse,

*<sup>17</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him. (Mark 12:17-NIV)*

Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." I think it is pretty straight forward, be honest about giving to God and be honest about giving to the government. Stop fudging. Stop be untruthful about your giving. Today is good day to start on a path of integrity. Thank you for your giving on-line, text to give, drop it off in the black boxes or mail in. In a minute I will pray over your giving to God.

### **The signs of the end times are to make you cheerful, not fearful.**

*<sup>1</sup> Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. <sup>2</sup> "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." <sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.*

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500 years ago, sailors were afraid to travel beyond the horizon. Sail too far and you run the risk of sailing over the edge. Losing life and cargo. So, they reasoned. So, they thought. So, they limited their exploration.

The common wisdom of the day, play it safe and stay away from the **unknown**.

Then a statue was placed at the Straight of Gibraltar, where the Spaniards had dominion over both sides of the straight. This is the narrowest margin, where you can stand in Africa and look across the straight and see Europe.

Near the entrance of the straight, the pillar of Hercules stood, a huge marker bore in its stone the words, in Latin,

**Ne Plus Ultra. No More Beyond.**

Then a Spanish boy played in the ocean. The boy walked along the beach. The boy cast his eyes toward the ocean horizon. The boy put out to sea to learn the trade of the Spanish explorer. Christopher Columbus and his voyage of 1492 entered a new era and entered a new world as he left the shores and the doors of Spain launching travels beyond the horizon.

And beyond the horizon Columbus traveled, where the barrier was broken and so they took the Latin phrase **“No More Beyond,”** and removed the first word and minted Spanish coins with the slogan, **“More Beyond.”**

Every day the world travels beyond the horizon line. You were made by God to explore what is approaching at the end of the age. Remove the **NO** from your future. Open your heart and life to God’s promises of Sovereignty as He is working his End Times Plan.

Yes, God has an End Times clock where sand is slipping through an hourglass.

Now, let me offer a warning about this next sermon series-**What’s Going On**, a study about the End Times. There are some things we will understand clearly, hurray for getting the right answer in class when you go to the chalk board.

But we must also be humble enough to admit some things in our Travelers Guide to the End Times, we will miss entirely. For so many they miss the punch line. The clue phone is ringing, and they fail to answer it. They miss the plot all together. So, what is the plot, pastor?

**The sign of the end times is about HOPE and about HIM.**

Again, the signs of the end times are to make you cheerful, not fearful.

Be careful of falling into the trap of thinking there is a tutorial for everything you want to know about the coming age. Coming Apocalypse. Why not start simple? Something we can all agree upon, whether you are pre-trib or mid-trib. Or post-trib, it will all pan out in the end. These are descriptions of when Jesus will return before or during the 7 years of Tribulation as spelled out in Matthew 24.

Whether you think the Antichrist will be Jewish or Muslim. Whether you have read the book of Daniel or Revelation or not.

We are all headed in the same direction. Each day brings us closer to a final heartbeat. A final breath. A final “I Love You, Danice.”

An airplane gets lost in a storm over the Atlantic Ocean as it flies through the middle of a hurricane. The captain has decided to notify the passengers as to his level of concern, level of threat, so he grabs his intercom and turns it on.

The first words out his mouth are, “the bad news is that we have lost our guidance and radar system, it has gone dark and we have no way to determine **where we are going**, or **what direction we are headed**.”

But cheer up friends, the good news is we are making good time!”

The world is filled with billions of humans making good time, as they wander lost, wander aimlessly with no clue where they are, even more sad, or where they are going.

God’s Word does not leave us with a blank screen or dark radar.

God’s word is our guidance system, and it tells us where we are going. History is not an endless recurrence of reincarnated life cycles. This world will not continue forever through a series of infinite life cycles of history.

God’s word is clear. God has a Sovereign plan that is unfolding before your very eyes. Watch the nightly news or grab your screen and go to your preferred media outlet. News is synced with God’s providence, God’s plan even though the news reporting has no idea it is reporting End Times news. David Muir and the Messiah Jesus are on the same page more than most of us realize.

No one is getting any younger. Death comes to the young, old, perfectly healthy, those hanging on by life support. Death comes to the evil and too the environmentalist. Death comes to the delightful and to the deprived.

Death swallows up the commoner and king, the poor and the prince. So here is my question to go along with my analysis: Since death is inevitable, shouldn’t YOU be making plans for your death and the afterlife?

God’s word suggests as much. Heaven is referred to over 500 times in the Bible. The New Testament mentions Jesus return more than 300 times with 1 out of every 30 verses. There are 27 books in the New Testament and 23 of them refer to Jesus second coming! Equally important is the idea we are told over 50 times in the Bible, “be ready.”

*<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. (2 Peter 3:10-NIV)*

*26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27<sup>a</sup> People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. (Luke 17-NIV)*

Danice and I have 1 beauty and 3 beasts. Kenny was born in San Diego, and Rebekah (Chewbeka), Jesse and Joseph were born in Everett, Washington. I too grew up in Everett, Washington. The home of the original Boeing Plant.

When Kenny came along, we had been married about 2 years, and served as the college Pastors in San Diego, California. We had no family in the area and so the pregnancy journey for this transplanted Texas family was not only new, but it was also by ourselves.

The joy of being new parents was thrilling. We went to doctor appointments together. We were excited but also anxious at the same time. Danice and I traveled the pregnancy road together.

In the **Travelers Guide** for first time parents there was early pregnancy sickness and suggestions to take La Mas classes. We read all pregnancy literature we could get our hands on and asked all kinds of questions about having a baby.

We moved from an apartment to larger house making room for an expanding family. Then one day, preborn little Kenny made himself known. A kick here, a bump there. I had to put my hand on Danice's belly to feel the kick myself. Life was growing. Now, Danice had to be concerned about diet, strenuous exercise and getting some extra rest. Then we finally arrived at the last month of pregnancy. The 9<sup>th</sup> month, it was December and still sunny and warm in San Diego.

One evening Danice and I were eating in our favorite Mexican restaurant just a couple of weeks before Kenny was to arrive, and surprisingly we saw Danice's, baby doctor in the same Mexican restaurant. We tried to hide behind the menus. We positioned our chairs to not look at him. If we had one of those big nose and black mustache props, we would have put it on.

Then the moment of truth, as doc was leaving, he strolled past our table, greeted us, asked how Danice she was doing, and said, "you and the baby will feel that those enchilada's tomorrow." Our responsibility was to get ready for delivery, be patient, not live with anxiety. We were to cast off fear and lower the RPMs of apprehension because we were under good care by the that doctor and Grossmont Hospital.

By now, some moms listening to this are cringing, smiling or wondering how **did the delivery go?** Like many couples we made a false run to the hospital thinking it was time to have the baby. The doctor was sweet, when he announced those were **only** Braxton's hicks and not birth pains, we were deeply disappointed. We were positively sure we had read the signs correctly.

That day, sadly we retreated to our home and settled in for more waiting. More waiting and wondering. More waiting and working. More waiting and watching.

You would have thought that living in San Diego, walking along the beach and taking in the Mediterranean sun would have somehow added relief and comfort. It did not and Danice was growing increasingly nervous, frustrated and ready to have that baby.

I did not help the matters by adding my unfiltered humor, “there she blows,” I would say. Ouch! Sometimes I would waddle around the house, providing some identificational compassion, although Danice did not see it that way.

One of the great biblical illustrations that Jesus is about to return is the **future approaching birth pains that go with delivery.**

**As a baby is about to be born, even us men know  
that labor pains increase as the delivery draws near.**

It is a time of great hope and new possibilities. I am talking about Jesus’ return and the birth pains indicating the soon arrival of a new baby.

It can also be a time of great fear and anxiety. Again, I am talking about Jesus’ return and the birth pains indicating the soon arrival of a new baby.

Just as the medical profession has spelled out the stages, signs and descriptive elements connected to the birthing journey, complete with details about birth pains, God’s word uses the metaphor of **birth pains** to illustrate that Jesus return is Coming Soon.

So here is my question for you. Is the world experiencing the beginning of birth pains, indicating Jesus Soon Return?

Jesus thinks so, and that was the basis of his teaching in Matthew 24-25, over 2000 years ago. These chapters are Jesus own prophetic predictions about the future.

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Ok, I need to quit wasting valuable time, the clock is ticking and the sand is pouring. Some of you have been watching the hourglass, and asking yourself, how long will it take for that sand to run out?

Others are thinking I might keep preaching until the sand runs completely out. I am tempted. This is a 4-hour, hourglass. Yes, I am tempted to preach today until the sand runs out, as they say.

There are 3 major biblical passages that spells out God's Sovereign plan for End Time events. The books that contain the essential keys to understanding the future are:

(1) Daniel

(2) Revelation

(3) Matthew, with its Olivet Discourse taught in Matthew 24 and 25.

We will be going through these chapters looking closely at the message Jesus gave to his disciples during the final week of his life. Matthew 24 is Jesus' final sermon about the End Times that he preached from the Mount of Olives.

This sermon is found in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. The sermon was given to only 4 of Jesus disciples. The sermon was Jesus' response to the question, when will come the end come?

*<sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup> "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?" (Mark 13-NIV)*

The tutorial that Peter, James, John and Andrew received was an intimate setting that spelled out an eschatological blueprint of the End Times!

Jesus is talking about the tribulation-seven years of terrible life destroying troubles, which will soon come to pass. The tribulation will be a 7-year season of struggle for all people, Christians and non-Christians. **But especially those who resist Satan.** In the end, those who align with Satan will get their due.

Did you know that God has provided a map for us? Here is one of many that you can look at see the BIG PICTURE. Again, there are some disagreements about the order and some of the actual events, nobody has an airtight forecast of the future. Here is a timeline spelled out in the book, *What Happens Next* by Max Lucado.

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These warnings in Matthew 24, are designed to get the attention of the wayward, or unbeliever who are in danger of entering into eternity with no plan of salvation to save them from eternal judgement.

*So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10-NIV)*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> - Remember that God is Sovereign**

God is sovereign and He is working His End Time plan.

God is not -partly- Sovereign.

God is not -sometimes- Sovereign.

God is not -mostly- Sovereign.

Are you in love and serving the Lord Jesus Christ who is sovereignly in control of all world events, the timing of events, as well as your personal life.

*Our God is in heaven;  
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Don't let anyone tell you otherwise, it is a part of the End Time deception that is filling the earth and making its way into the church.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> - Become totally dependent on God's word.**

Read it daily. Apply it often. Start to memorize now.

God's inspired and inerrant word of God takes priority over all other reports. News reports can make you fearful and anxious. God's word settles our hearts and removes our anxieties. If you are slipping into a negative perspective about the future; nothing could be further from the truth.

When Jesus Christ comes, he will be the **Savior** of his people and the **Judge** of the unbeliever. Which Jesus do you want to meet? Savior or Judge. You have to make a choice and do it before it is too late.

**Stop looking at the PROBLEMS of this life and start looking at the promises of the NEXT.**

So, whether you are Ready or Not, Jesus is about to return, in the clouds and then on the earth sometime later after the Tribulation. Are you ready? Let me help you be ready with this final prayer I want to offer you today.

If you asked me what is the one thing, I can do to not be deceived, not live in fear and be ready for Jesus' return? Daily ask God for a fresh Holy Spirit impartation. So, why not ask God to that right now. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Father,

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I feel unworthy to ask for the Holy Spirit to breathe on me. You said I could ask, so Jesus, breathe on me, the way You breathed on Your disciples. *"And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:22-NIV)*

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In Jesus' Name, Amen.

## What's Going On?

Pastor Ken

April 12, 2026

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line, we have been praying for you! Those who are new to Bethel Life Center or new to the Bible, we are going through Matthew 24-25. We teach right out of Bible at Bethel. Now, with Tax Day this week, April 15, I want to remind you of some words from our Savior about taxes and giving. Look on the screen at this verse,

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Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." I think it is pretty straight forward, be honest about giving to God and be honest about giving to the government. Stop fudging. Stop be untruthful about your giving. Today is good day to start on a path of integrity. Thank you for your giving on-line, text to give, drop it off in the black boxes or mail in. In a minute I will pray over your giving to God.

### **The signs of the end times are to make you cheerful, not fearful.**

*<sup>1</sup> Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. <sup>2</sup> "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." <sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.*

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500 years ago, sailors were afraid to travel beyond the horizon. Sail too far and you run the risk of sailing over the edge. Losing life and cargo. So, they reasoned. So, they thought. So, they limited their exploration.

The common wisdom of the day, play it safe and stay away from the **unknown**.

Then a statue was placed at the Straight of Gibraltar, where the Spaniards had dominion over both sides of the straight. This is the narrowest margin, where you can stand in Africa and look across the straight and see Europe.

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Then a Spanish boy played in the ocean. The boy walked along the beach. The boy cast his eyes toward the ocean horizon. The boy put out to sea to learn the trade of the Spanish explorer. Christopher Columbus and his voyage of 1492 entered a new era and entered a new world as he left the shores and the doors of Spain launching travels beyond the horizon.

And beyond the horizon Columbus traveled, where the barrier was broken and so they took the Latin phrase **“No More Beyond,”** and removed the first word and minted Spanish coins with the slogan, **“More Beyond.”**

Every day the world travels beyond the horizon line. You were made by God to explore what is approaching at the end of the age. Remove the **NO** from your future. Open your heart and life to God’s promises of Sovereignty as He is working his End Times Plan.

Yes, God has an End Times clock where sand is slipping through an hourglass.

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But we must also be humble enough to admit some things in our Travelers Guide to the End Times, we will miss entirely. For so many they miss the punch line. The clue phone is ringing, and they fail to answer it. They miss the plot all together. So, what is the plot, pastor?

**The sign of the end times is about HOPE and about HIM.**

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Whether you think the Antichrist will be Jewish or Muslim. Whether you have read the book of Daniel or Revelation or not.

We are all headed in the same direction. Each day brings us closer to a final heartbeat. A final breath. A final “I Love You, Danice.”

An airplane gets lost in a storm over the Atlantic Ocean as it flies through the middle of a hurricane. The captain has decided to notify the passengers as to his level of concern, level of threat, so he grabs his intercom and turns it on.

The first words out his mouth are, “the bad news is that we have lost our guidance and radar system, it has gone dark and we have no way to determine **where we are going**, or **what direction we are headed**.”

But cheer up friends, the good news is we are making good time!”

The world is filled with billions of humans making good time, as they wander lost, wander aimlessly with no clue where they are, even more sad, or where they are going.

God’s Word does not leave us with a blank screen or dark radar.

God’s word is our guidance system, and it tells us where we are going. History is not an endless recurrence of reincarnated life cycles. This world will not continue forever through a series of infinite life cycles of history.

God’s word is clear. God has a Sovereign plan that is unfolding before your very eyes. Watch the nightly news or grab your screen and go to your preferred media outlet. News is synced with God’s providence, God’s plan even though the news reporting has no idea it is reporting End Times news. David Muir and the Messiah Jesus are on the same page more than most of us realize.

No one is getting any younger. Death comes to the young, old, perfectly healthy, those hanging on by life support. Death comes to the evil and too the environmentalist. Death comes to the delightful and to the deprived.

Death swallows up the commoner and king, the poor and the prince. So here is my question to go along with my analysis: Since death is inevitable, shouldn’t YOU be making plans for your death and the afterlife?

God’s word suggests as much. Heaven is referred to over 500 times in the Bible. The New Testament mentions Jesus return more than 300 times with 1 out of every 30 verses. There are 27 books in the New Testament and 23 of them refer to Jesus second coming! Equally important is the idea we are told over 50 times in the Bible, “be ready.”

*<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. (2 Peter 3:10-NIV)*

*26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27<sup>a</sup> People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. (Luke 17-NIV)*

Danice and I have 1 beauty and 3 beasts. Kenny was born in San Diego, and Rebekah (Chewbeka), Jesse and Joseph were born in Everett, Washington. I too grew up in Everett, Washington. The home of the original Boeing Plant.

When Kenny came along, we had been married about 2 years, and served as the college Pastors in San Diego, California. We had no family in the area and so the pregnancy journey for this transplanted Texas family was not only new, but it was also by ourselves.

The joy of being new parents was thrilling. We went to doctor appointments together. We were excited but also anxious at the same time. Danice and I traveled the pregnancy road together.

In the **Travelers Guide** for first time parents there was early pregnancy sickness and suggestions to take La Mas classes. We read all pregnancy literature we could get our hands on and asked all kinds of questions about having a baby.

We moved from an apartment to larger house making room for an expanding family. Then one day, preborn little Kenny made himself known. A kick here, a bump there. I had to put my hand on Danice's belly to feel the kick myself. Life was growing. Now, Danice had to be concerned about diet, strenuous exercise and getting some extra rest. Then we finally arrived at the last month of pregnancy. The 9<sup>th</sup> month, it was December and still sunny and warm in San Diego.

One evening Danice and I were eating in our favorite Mexican restaurant just a couple of weeks before Kenny was to arrive, and surprisingly we saw Danice's, baby doctor in the same Mexican restaurant. We tried to hide behind the menus. We positioned our chairs to not look at him. If we had one of those big nose and black mustache props, we would have put it on.

Then the moment of truth, as doc was leaving, he strolled past our table, greeted us, asked how Danice she was doing, and said, "you and the baby will feel that those enchilada's tomorrow." Our responsibility was to get ready for delivery, be patient, not live with anxiety. We were to cast off fear and lower the RPMs of apprehension because we were under good care by the that doctor and Grossmont Hospital.

By now, some moms listening to this are cringing, smiling or wondering how **did the delivery go?** Like many couples we made a false run to the hospital thinking it was time to have the baby. The doctor was sweet, when he announced those were **only** Braxton's hicks and not birth pains, we were deeply disappointed. We were positively sure we had read the signs correctly.

That day, sadly we retreated to our home and settled in for more waiting. More waiting and wondering. More waiting and working. More waiting and watching.

You would have thought that living in San Diego, walking along the beach and taking in the Mediterranean sun would have somehow added relief and comfort. It did not and Danice was growing increasingly nervous, frustrated and ready to have that baby.

I did not help the matters by adding my unfiltered humor, “there she blows,” I would say. Ouch! Sometimes I would waddle around the house, providing some identificational compassion, although Danice did not see it that way.

One of the great biblical illustrations that Jesus is about to return is the **future approaching birth pains that go with delivery.**

**As a baby is about to be born, even us men know  
that labor pains increase as the delivery draws near.**

It is a time of great hope and new possibilities. I am talking about Jesus’ return and the birth pains indicating the soon arrival of a new baby.

It can also be a time of great fear and anxiety. Again, I am talking about Jesus’ return and the birth pains indicating the soon arrival of a new baby.

Just as the medical profession has spelled out the stages, signs and descriptive elements connected to the birthing journey, complete with details about birth pains, God’s word uses the metaphor of **birth pains** to illustrate that Jesus return is Coming Soon.

So here is my question for you. Is the world experiencing the beginning of birth pains, indicating Jesus Soon Return?

Jesus thinks so, and that was the basis of his teaching in Matthew 24-25, over 2000 years ago. These chapters are Jesus own prophetic predictions about the future.

*<sup>8</sup>All these are the beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

Ok, I need to quit wasting valuable time, the clock is ticking and the sand is pouring. Some of you have been watching the hourglass, and asking yourself, how long will it take for that sand to run out?

Others are thinking I might keep preaching until the sand runs completely out. I am tempted. This is a 4-hour, hourglass. Yes, I am tempted to preach today until the sand runs out, as they say.

There are 3 major biblical passages that spells out God's Sovereign plan for End Time events. The books that contain the essential keys to understanding the future are:

(1) Daniel

(2) Revelation

(3) Matthew, with its Olivet Discourse taught in Matthew 24 and 25.

We will be going through these chapters looking closely at the message Jesus gave to his disciples during the final week of his life. Matthew 24 is Jesus' final sermon about the End Times that he preached from the Mount of Olives.

This sermon is found in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. The sermon was given to only 4 of Jesus disciples. The sermon was Jesus' response to the question, when will come the end come?

*<sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup> "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?" (Mark 13-NIV)*

The tutorial that Peter, James, John and Andrew received was an intimate setting that spelled out an eschatological blueprint of the End Times!

Jesus is talking about the tribulation-seven years of terrible life destroying troubles, which will soon come to pass. The tribulation will be a 7-year season of struggle for all people, Christians and non-Christians. **But especially those who resist Satan.** In the end, those who align with Satan will get their due.

Did you know that God has provided a map for us? Here is one of many that you can look at see the BIG PICTURE. Again, there are some disagreements about the order and some of the actual events, nobody has an airtight forecast of the future. Here is a timeline spelled out in the book, *What Happens Next* by Max Lucado.

This may be shocking, but even Jesus doesn't even know some of the timing. It is beyond his clearance protocol.

*But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (Matthew 24:36-NIV)*

Notice who authored those words-Matthew. One of Jesus followers. **Question.** Since this material was so important, why wasn't Matthew there to take notes that day? If he was to be the eventual author inspired by the Holy Spirit, and if the material was so important you don't want to get it wrong, what was Matthew doing that day on the Mount of Olives?

Again, God is the one who makes the call in all kinds of matters of our lives, he alone has his reasons and Sovereign plan. Matthew the tax collector tells us Jesus has been teaching all day in the temple.

In Matthew 23, he has been delivering some of his harshest sermons before the religious brainiacs. Some of Israel's most zealous do-gooders. Let me offer just the first of 7 woes.

*<sup>13</sup> Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. (Matthew 23-NIV)*

As Jesus is leaving the temple grounds, for the last time the disciples are awestruck by Herod's Temple. They literally walk right past it. Jesus public teaching is now over. It was an emotional and tragic moment, the harshness of the message and the finality of the location.

*<sup>1</sup> Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

After Jesus gave his heated and forceful warnings to the Scribes and Pharisees the disciples left the temple and descended into the Kidron valley and started up the hill called the Mount of Olives.

With Jerusalem packed with tourists, the only lodging available was in nearby Bethany where Jesus had stayed many times with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. A two-mile journey to the home of some friends.

As the disciples ascended to the summit of the Mount of Olives, they glanced back over their shoulders and stared back at Herod's Temple, one the ancient wonders of the world. The gospel of Mark informs us that it was the beauty that caught the disciples attention.

*As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" (Mark 13:1-NIV)*

The disciples were mesmerized by Herod's temple and the sheer size of the stones used to build it. These Galileans had seldom come in contact with such size and strength of architecture. To this day, the Western Wall can still be seen.

In fact, you can get on a video cam and go to the Western Wall. You can put a prayer request into the Western Wall. In response to the disciple's admiration for Herod's temple and its man-made splendor, Jesus replied,"

<sup>2</sup> “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” <sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us, “they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24-NIV)

Jesus surprising response to their child like enthusiasm caught the disciples by surprise. Jesus’ course corrects the disciple’s fixation with buildings and directs them to more important matters than their obsession with the opulent.

That day on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sets forth before disciples the events that would take place in the future, just before his return to earth. Jesus does this in the literary outline I am calling:

### **Six Signs of Jesus’ Return**

Jesus’ return happens in two stages. **First**, there is the rapture where Jesus will return only in the air as he removes Christians from the earth.

<sup>16</sup> *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* <sup>17</sup> *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4-ESV)*

**Second, Jesus returns** to the physical earth bringing with Christians from heaven to engage the Anti-Christ in an End Time battle called The Battle of Armageddon.

<sup>29</sup> *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* <sup>30</sup> *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:29-30-ESV).*

This battle will take place in the Valley of Megiddo, in Israel. Why this valley? More battles have been fought here than any place in the world.

Regarding the end of the age, the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer 30:7), Jesus gives **6 signs** that would be associated with the last generation of people on the earth prior to Jesus’ return and his setting up his earth kingdom or 1000-year reign. What? More about that in the future.

Your homework is to think about these signs as you receive news this week.

**First birth pain:      Widespread deception by false Christs (vs 4-5)**

*<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many." (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Second birth pain:    Increase in wars and rumors of wars (vs 6-7)**

*<sup>6</sup> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. <sup>7</sup> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Third birth pain:      Worldwide devastation by famines and earthquakes (vs 7)**

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**Fourth birth pain:     Acceleration of persecution and death of Christians (vs 7-9)**

*<sup>9</sup> Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Fifth birth pain:      A great falling away from Christ (vs 10-12)**

*<sup>10</sup> At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, <sup>11</sup> and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. <sup>12</sup> Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Sixth birth pain:      Worldwide evangelism (vs 13-14)**

*<sup>13</sup> But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

I don't think Jesus' description of the end was intended to make us scared. It would be easy to become paranoid, in one hand is your screen updating the current end time world news, in the other hand is your Bible as you search for answers. Not a bad idea.

Some become alarmed starting in their mind a countdown to the return of Jesus after learning that certain alarming events in global politics are unfolding. Let me give you three suggestions for living confident in Christ as the sand of time runs out in **this hourglass**.

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Again, the signs of the end times are to make you cheerful, not fearful.

Be careful of falling into the trap of thinking there is a tutorial for everything you want to know about the coming age. Coming Apocalypse. Why not start simple? Something we can all agree upon, whether you are pre-trib or mid-trib. Or post-trib, it will all pan out in the end. These are descriptions of when Jesus will return before or during the 7 years of Tribulation as spelled out in Matthew 24.

Whether you think the Antichrist will be Jewish or Muslim. Whether you have read the book of Daniel or Revelation or not.

We are all headed in the same direction. Each day brings us closer to a final heartbeat. A final breath. A final “I Love You, Danice.”

An airplane gets lost in a storm over the Atlantic Ocean as it flies through the middle of a hurricane. The captain has decided to notify the passengers as to his level of concern, level of threat, so he grabs his intercom and turns it on.

The first words out his mouth are, “the bad news is that we have lost our guidance and radar system, it has gone dark and we have no way to determine **where we are going**, or **what direction we are headed**.”

But cheer up friends, the good news is we are making good time!”

The world is filled with billions of humans making good time, as they wander lost, wander aimlessly with no clue where they are, even more sad, or where they are going.

God’s Word does not leave us with a blank screen or dark radar.

God’s word is our guidance system, and it tells us where we are going. History is not an endless recurrence of reincarnated life cycles. This world will not continue forever through a series of infinite life cycles of history.

God’s word is clear. God has a Sovereign plan that is unfolding before your very eyes. Watch the nightly news or grab your screen and go to your preferred media outlet. News is synced with God’s providence, God’s plan even though the news reporting has no idea it is reporting End Times news. David Muir and the Messiah Jesus are on the same page more than most of us realize.

No one is getting any younger. Death comes to the young, old, perfectly healthy, those hanging on by life support. Death comes to the evil and too the environmentalist. Death comes to the delightful and to the deprived.

Death swallows up the commoner and king, the poor and the prince. So here is my question to go along with my analysis: Since death is inevitable, shouldn’t YOU be making plans for your death and the afterlife?

God’s word suggests as much. Heaven is referred to over 500 times in the Bible. The New Testament mentions Jesus return more than 300 times with 1 out of every 30 verses. There are 27 books in the New Testament and 23 of them refer to Jesus second coming! Equally important is the idea we are told over 50 times in the Bible, “be ready.”

*<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. (2 Peter 3:10-NIV)*

*26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27<sup>a</sup> People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. (Luke 17-NIV)*

Danice and I have 1 beauty and 3 beasts. Kenny was born in San Diego, and Rebekah (Chewbeka), Jesse and Joseph were born in Everett, Washington. I too grew up in Everett, Washington. The home of the original Boeing Plant.

When Kenny came along, we had been married about 2 years, and served as the college Pastors in San Diego, California. We had no family in the area and so the pregnancy journey for this transplanted Texas family was not only new, but it was also by ourselves.

The joy of being new parents was thrilling. We went to doctor appointments together. We were excited but also anxious at the same time. Danice and I traveled the pregnancy road together.

In the **Travelers Guide** for first time parents there was early pregnancy sickness and suggestions to take La Mas classes. We read all pregnancy literature we could get our hands on and asked all kinds of questions about having a baby.

We moved from an apartment to larger house making room for an expanding family. Then one day, preborn little Kenny made himself known. A kick here, a bump there. I had to put my hand on Danice's belly to feel the kick myself. Life was growing. Now, Danice had to be concerned about diet, strenuous exercise and getting some extra rest. Then we finally arrived at the last month of pregnancy. The 9<sup>th</sup> month, it was December and still sunny and warm in San Diego.

One evening Danice and I were eating in our favorite Mexican restaurant just a couple of weeks before Kenny was to arrive, and surprisingly we saw Danice's, baby doctor in the same Mexican restaurant. We tried to hide behind the menus. We positioned our chairs to not look at him. If we had one of those big nose and black mustache props, we would have put it on.

Then the moment of truth, as doc was leaving, he strolled past our table, greeted us, asked how Danice she was doing, and said, "you and the baby will feel that those enchilada's tomorrow." Our responsibility was to get ready for delivery, be patient, not live with anxiety. We were to cast off fear and lower the RPMs of apprehension because we were under good care by the that doctor and Grossmont Hospital.

By now, some moms listening to this are cringing, smiling or wondering how **did the delivery go?** Like many couples we made a false run to the hospital thinking it was time to have the baby. The doctor was sweet, when he announced those were **only** Braxton's hicks and not birth pains, we were deeply disappointed. We were positively sure we had read the signs correctly.

That day, sadly we retreated to our home and settled in for more waiting. More waiting and wondering. More waiting and working. More waiting and watching.

You would have thought that living in San Diego, walking along the beach and taking in the Mediterranean sun would have somehow added relief and comfort. It did not and Danice was growing increasingly nervous, frustrated and ready to have that baby.

I did not help the matters by adding my unfiltered humor, “there she blows,” I would say. Ouch! Sometimes I would waddle around the house, providing some identificational compassion, although Danice did not see it that way.

One of the great biblical illustrations that Jesus is about to return is the **future approaching birth pains that go with delivery.**

**As a baby is about to be born, even us men know  
that labor pains increase as the delivery draws near.**

It is a time of great hope and new possibilities. I am talking about Jesus’ return and the birth pains indicating the soon arrival of a new baby.

It can also be a time of great fear and anxiety. Again, I am talking about Jesus’ return and the birth pains indicating the soon arrival of a new baby.

Just as the medical profession has spelled out the stages, signs and descriptive elements connected to the birthing journey, complete with details about birth pains, God’s word uses the metaphor of **birth pains** to illustrate that Jesus return is Coming Soon.

So here is my question for you. Is the world experiencing the beginning of birth pains, indicating Jesus Soon Return?

Jesus thinks so, and that was the basis of his teaching in Matthew 24-25, over 2000 years ago. These chapters are Jesus own prophetic predictions about the future.

*<sup>8</sup>All these are the beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

Ok, I need to quit wasting valuable time, the clock is ticking and the sand is pouring. Some of you have been watching the hourglass, and asking yourself, how long will it take for that sand to run out?

Others are thinking I might keep preaching until the sand runs completely out. I am tempted. This is a 4-hour, hourglass. Yes, I am tempted to preach today until the sand runs out, as they say.

There are 3 major biblical passages that spells out God's Sovereign plan for End Time events. The books that contain the essential keys to understanding the future are:

(1) Daniel

(2) Revelation

(3) Matthew, with its Olivet Discourse taught in Matthew 24 and 25.

We will be going through these chapters looking closely at the message Jesus gave to his disciples during the final week of his life. Matthew 24 is Jesus' final sermon about the End Times that he preached from the Mount of Olives.

This sermon is found in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. The sermon was given to only 4 of Jesus disciples. The sermon was Jesus' response to the question, when will come the end come?

*<sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup> "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?" (Mark 13-NIV)*

The tutorial that Peter, James, John and Andrew received was an intimate setting that spelled out an eschatological blueprint of the End Times!

Jesus is talking about the tribulation-seven years of terrible life destroying troubles, which will soon come to pass. The tribulation will be a 7-year season of struggle for all people, Christians and non-Christians. **But especially those who resist Satan.** In the end, those who align with Satan will get their due.

Did you know that God has provided a map for us? Here is one of many that you can look at see the BIG PICTURE. Again, there are some disagreements about the order and some of the actual events, nobody has an airtight forecast of the future. Here is a timeline spelled out in the book, *What Happens Next* by Max Lucado.

This may be shocking, but even Jesus doesn't even know some of the timing. It is beyond his clearance protocol.

*But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (Matthew 24:36-NIV)*

Notice who authored those words-Matthew. One of Jesus followers. **Question.** Since this material was so important, why wasn't Matthew there to take notes that day? If he was to be the eventual author inspired by the Holy Spirit, and if the material was so important you don't want to get it wrong, what was Matthew doing that day on the Mount of Olives?

Again, God is the one who makes the call in all kinds of matters of our lives, he alone has his reasons and Sovereign plan. Matthew the tax collector tells us Jesus has been teaching all day in the temple.

In Matthew 23, he has been delivering some of his harshest sermons before the religious brainiacs. Some of Israel's most zealous do-gooders. Let me offer just the first of 7 woes.

*<sup>13</sup> Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. (Matthew 23-NIV)*

As Jesus is leaving the temple grounds, for the last time the disciples are awestruck by Herod's Temple. They literally walk right past it. Jesus public teaching is now over. It was an emotional and tragic moment, the harshness of the message and the finality of the location.

*<sup>1</sup> Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

After Jesus gave his heated and forceful warnings to the Scribes and Pharisees the disciples left the temple and descended into the Kidron valley and started up the hill called the Mount of Olives.

With Jerusalem packed with tourists, the only lodging available was in nearby Bethany where Jesus had stayed many times with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. A two-mile journey to the home of some friends.

As the disciples ascended to the summit of the Mount of Olives, they glanced back over their shoulders and stared back at Herod's Temple, one the ancient wonders of the world. The gospel of Mark informs us that it was the beauty that caught the disciples attention.

*As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" (Mark 13:1-NIV)*

The disciples were mesmerized by Herod's temple and the sheer size of the stones used to build it. These Galileans had seldom come in contact with such size and strength of architecture. To this day, the Western Wall can still be seen.

In fact, you can get on a video cam and go to the Western Wall. You can put a prayer request into the Western Wall. In response to the disciple's admiration for Herod's temple and its man-made splendor, Jesus replied,"

<sup>2</sup> “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” <sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us, “they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24-NIV)

Jesus surprising response to their child like enthusiasm caught the disciples by surprise. Jesus’ course corrects the disciple’s fixation with buildings and directs them to more important matters than their obsession with the opulent.

That day on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sets forth before disciples the events that would take place in the future, just before his return to earth. Jesus does this in the literary outline I am calling:

### **Six Signs of Jesus’ Return**

Jesus’ return happens in two stages. **First**, there is the rapture where Jesus will return only in the air as he removes Christians from the earth.

<sup>16</sup> *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* <sup>17</sup> *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4-ESV)*

**Second, Jesus returns** to the physical earth bringing with Christians from heaven to engage the Anti-Christ in an End Time battle called The Battle of Armageddon.

<sup>29</sup> *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* <sup>30</sup> *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:29-30-ESV).*

This battle will take place in the Valley of Megiddo, in Israel. Why this valley? More battles have been fought here than any place in the world.

Regarding the end of the age, the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer 30:7), Jesus gives **6 signs** that would be associated with the last generation of people on the earth prior to Jesus’ return and his setting up his earth kingdom or 1000-year reign. What? More about that in the future.

Your homework is to think about these signs as you receive news this week.

**First birth pain:      Widespread deception by false Christs (vs 4-5)**

*<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many." (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Second birth pain:    Increase in wars and rumors of wars (vs 6-7)**

*<sup>6</sup> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. <sup>7</sup> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Third birth pain:      Worldwide devastation by famines and earthquakes (vs 7)**

*<sup>7</sup> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Fourth birth pain:    Acceleration of persecution and death of Christians (vs 7-9)**

*<sup>9</sup> Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Fifth birth pain:      A great falling away from Christ (vs 10-12)**

*<sup>10</sup> At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, <sup>11</sup> and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. <sup>12</sup> Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

**Sixth birth pain:      Worldwide evangelism (vs 13-14)**

*<sup>13</sup> But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24-NIV)*

I don't think Jesus' description of the end was intended to make us scared. It would be easy to become paranoid, in one hand is your screen updating the current end time world news, in the other hand is your Bible as you search for answers. Not a bad idea.

Some become alarmed starting in their mind a countdown to the return of Jesus after learning that certain alarming events in global politics are unfolding. Let me give you three suggestions for living confident in Christ as the sand of time runs out in **this hourglass**.

### **1<sup>st</sup> - Reject the temptation to live in fear.**

Jesus words are not meant to scare you into salvation. Although, some may choose to follow Jesus because of the urgency of the hour.

These warnings in Matthew 24, are designed to get the attention of the wayward, or unbeliever who are in danger of entering into eternity with no plan of salvation to save them from eternal judgement.

*So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10-NIV)*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> - Remember that God is Sovereign**

God is sovereign and He is working His End Time plan.

God is not -partly- Sovereign.

God is not -sometimes- Sovereign.

God is not -mostly- Sovereign.

Are you in love and serving the Lord Jesus Christ who is sovereignly in control of all world events, the timing of events, as well as your personal life.

*Our God is in heaven;  
he does whatever pleases him. (Psalm 115:3-NIV)*

Don't let anyone tell you otherwise, it is a part of the End Time deception that is filling the earth and making its way into the church.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> - Become totally dependent on God's word.**

Read it daily. Apply it often. Start to memorize now.

God's inspired and inerrant word of God takes priority over all other reports. News reports can make you fearful and anxious. God's word settles our hearts and removes our anxieties. If you are slipping into a negative perspective about the future; nothing could be further from the truth.

When Jesus Christ comes, he will be the **Savior** of his people and the **Judge** of the unbeliever. Which Jesus do you want to meet? Savior or Judge. You have to make a choice and do it before it is too late.

**Stop looking at the PROBLEMS of this life and start looking at the promises of the NEXT.**

So, whether you are Ready or Not, Jesus is about to return, in the clouds and then on the earth sometime later after the Tribulation. Are you ready? Let me help you be ready with this final prayer I want to offer you today.

If you asked me what is the one thing, I can do to not be deceived, not live in fear and be ready for Jesus' return? Daily ask God for a fresh Holy Spirit impartation. So, why not ask God to that right now. The book of Acts teaches us that Jesus Christ is directing our daily lives, providing opportunities for us to be every place Jesus wants to be in the power of the HS.

Father,

I welcome the Holy Spirit's entry into my life. To be with me. To be in me. To overshadow me. For these reasons and so many others, I feel helpless. I feel inadequate.

I feel unworthy to ask for the Holy Spirit to breathe on me. You said I could ask, so Jesus, breathe on me, the way You breathed on Your disciples. *"And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:22-NIV)*

Even though the Holy Spirit defies understanding and comprehension, I welcome the Holy Spirit into all areas of my life. To baptize me. To overshadow me. To refill me. To empower me. To come upon me.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.