

The Time of the End

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Preacher: Cory Brock

[0 : 00] We're going to read Daniel 8 together from the Old Testament. Let me invite Jemima to come and read scripture for us. In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the first.

And I saw in the vision, and when I saw, I was in Susa, the citadel, which is in the province of Elham. And I saw in the vision, and I was at the Yulai Canal. I raised my eyes and saw, and behold, a ram standing on the bank of the canal.

It had two horns, and both horns were high, but one was higher than the other. And the higher one came up last. I saw the ram charging westward and northward and southward.

No beast could stand before him, and there was no one who could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great. As I was considering, behold, a male goat came from the west across the face of the whole earth, without touching the ground.

And the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. He came to the ram with the two horns, which I had seen standing on the banks of the canal. And he ran at him in his powerful wrath. I saw him come close to the ram, and he was enraged against him, and struck the ram and broke his two horns.

[1 : 14] And the ram had no power to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled on him. And there was no one who could rescue the ram from his power. Then the goat became exceedingly great, but when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns towards the four winds of heaven.

Out of one of them came a little horn, which grew exceedingly great towards the south, towards the east, and towards a glorious land. It grew great even to the host of heaven.

And some of the host and some of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them. It became great, even as great as a prince of the host. And the regular burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown.

And a host will be given over to it, together with the regular burnt offering, because of transgression. And it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper. Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary, and the host to be trampled underfoot?

And it said to me, For 2,300 evenings and mornings, then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state. When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it.

[2 : 35] And behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Uli, and it called, Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.

So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end. And when he had spoken to me, I fell in a deep sleep with my face to the ground.

But he touched me and made me stand up. He said, Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end.

As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Medea and Persia. And the goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king.

As for the horn that was broken, in place of which the other four arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power. And at the latter end of the kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold countenance, one who understands riddles, shall arise.

[3 : 42] His power shall be great, but not by his own power. And he shall cause fearful destruction, and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints.

By his cunning, he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall become great. Without warning, he shall destroy many. And he shall even rise up against the prince of princes, and he shall be broken, but by no human hand.

The vision of the evenings and the mornings that has been told is true. But seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now. And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days.

Then I rose and went about the king's business. But I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it. We're in the book of Daniel, working our way through.

We come to Daniel 8 today, and Daniel's been, we've been saying every week, it's all about learning in the modern day, in the 21st century, how to live by faith and with wisdom in the midst of exile.

[4 : 46] So exile is anytime you're away from the city of God, and that's the condition all believers are in until Jesus comes back and we see the new heavens and the new earth. And that's pictured symbolically in the Old Testament through the exiles of Israel.

And so Daniel and his friends, they're in exile. They are in Babylon. They were taken to Babylon in 605 BC. And we are reading a vision that happens about 55 years after that.

So they've been around. Daniel's been there for 55 years. And the choice that Daniel and his friends had throughout the whole story is really just, am I going to be a faithful public witness to the faith of the God of the Bible in the midst of a city that is very hostile to that faith?

And so over and over again, these wicked kings try to ultimately kill Daniel and his friends because of their faithfulness, because they won't bow down to false gods and even to the kings themselves. And so this book is really saying, we have the same choice that modern believers, believers of every age are faced with the same choice, and that's to live lives of public faith, a genuine public faith that will most certainly at some points cost you, or to live a private life.

[5 : 58] So that's the choice of secularism. Secularism, what is it? It says that it's okay to believe what you want to believe, but never bring your faith into the public sphere. That's secularism. And so we face the same issues that Daniel faced, that choice to be men and women of public faith, courage, faithfulness in every sphere of life, and to count the cost for that.

And that's exactly the dejection that is potential here, but yet the faithfulness of God consistently throughout the story to Daniel and his friends. You've got to remember that 55 years in, Daniel has this vision, and the temple is still destroyed back in Jerusalem, 55 years of exile away from the homeland.

There's no hope on the horizon by any circumstances in their outward life. So there's so much potential for leaving the faith, for being dissuaded by the events of life.

And the same thing can happen to any of us in life. And there enters apocalyptic literature. So we've just read an apocalyptic vision, and that's a certain category in the Bible where God gives these grand, often terrifying images.

And they're not meant to confuse us, though to modern readers they are very confusing, but they're meant to actually encourage you and to sort of shake you up. And apocalyptic literature in the Bible is written to believers.

[7 : 25] So the first half of Daniel is Daniel the prophet speaking to these prideful, evil kings and saying, you need to humble yourself before the Lord, repent. The second half, these visions, is written to Christians, to believers in the Old Testament, saying that in the midst of oppression, where it feels like there is nothing but loss.

There is no wins. These visions, these images, are meant to shake up the heart and say that there is a hope on the horizon, but it's often going to get bad again before it gets worse.

And that's what apocalyptic literature says. And so really the question of the passage, verse 13, we get this vision. I'm going to explain it in just a moment. And in verse 13, the angels of heaven say to the Son of Man, the man in this passage, the prince, how long, how long will these events continue to take place and the people of God continue to be broken and suffer?

And that's the question. We sang it in Psalm 13 just now. How long? There are times where you will get to a place in life where it very much feels like God is silent and you will have to say, how long will this go on?

And these apocalyptic moments in the Bible are exactly written for that. They've happened over and over again to believers throughout world history. It is happening in our lives.

[8 : 45] It is happening in somebody's life today. It will. It's coming. And the question is how long? And when it feels like God is silent, the call, the invitation, let me give you the main point, but we won't finish, okay?

Let me give you the main point. The main point is this. This is an invitation, this vision, to have an enduring faith, an enduring faith when it feels like you have been walking through the valley for a long time.

55 years they had been walking through the valley. And the prophecy is written so that you can know there is a real reason, there's a strong reason to stick with faith.

And so let's think about it. First, what Daniel saw. What is this vision really? That's all we want to do first. And then second, let me give you just two reasons to have an enduring faith that this prophecy invites you to do.

So first, what Daniel saw. All right, this is two years after Daniel 7. So he had had a vision in about 552, and here we are in around 550.

[9 : 46] And he's still in Babylon, and he has this vision where he sees himself, in verse 2, in Susa. Susa is in Iran today.

It's the capital of Persia in this time. So Daniel is sleeping in Babylon, but having a dream, a vision that he's in Susa. So that's a movement of 220 miles from Iraq to Iran today.

And when he sees himself in Susa, the capital, by the way, the Persians are going to rule from Susa for 200 years. They own Babylon in this book as well. And what he sees is he sees two beasts, a goat and a ram.

Daniel chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar had seen four elements, gold, silver, bronze, iron, representing four kingdoms. Daniel chapter 7, Daniel saw four beasts.

Daniel chapter 2, the beasts get more specific, and we focus on the two middle beasts. Okay, so stick with me for just a second. In Daniel 7, there's four beasts.

[10 : 48] In Daniel 2, they're different animals, but they're the middle two beasts. And we're told very explicitly what they stand for. At the end of the passage, we're told they stand for Media, Persia, one kingdom, and Greece, the other kingdom.

So just for a second, let's think about the two beasts. Verse 3 and 4, we're told about the ram.

That's the first one. And in verse 20, the angel Gabriel says, that is Media, Persia, a kingdom.

And we read about that kingdom taking over in the book of Daniel. This ram has two horns. One is, I'm doing this so you'll visualize. One has a longer horn than the other.

And that's because Persia was a much stronger kingdom, but they had gathered the Medians with them. So that's the two horns. And we read that they are very powerful. They're very mighty.

No one can defeat them. But then in verses 5 to 8, there's a goat. And the goat floats across the land. And the goat comes in. The image of the floating is swift.

[11 : 47] It's blitzkrieg-style warfare. And this goat comes in and smashes the horns of the ram, who they thought nobody could defeat. And the goat becomes the ruler of the nations.

And we're told down in verse 21, that goat is Greece. All right, so what we're reading about here is what happened in the year 333 B.C. when Alexander the Great, the king of Greece, came and defeated Persia, Media Persia.

That's a battle that actually occurs later in history, 200 years after this prophecy. And I think that this passage is the origin of the modern-day use of the acronym GOAT, G-O-A-T, the greatest of all time.

Obviously, the goat here, you know, nobody thought the ram could be defeated, but the goat is the goat. The goat comes in and crushes the ram. Now, seriously, Joyce Baldwin, one writer, she says, what we have here in a few short verses is about 200 years of the war of nations packed into a couple sentences.

And what we're being talked about here is that kingdom of Alexander the Great. Now, he, Alexander the Great, was tutored by Aristotle. He was very smart. He was truly great, a great man, not a good man.

[13 : 01] He, in four years, ruled from India to Eastern Europe. He ruled the whole known world as a 22-year-old. By 27, he had conquered all the lands.

He wept when he was 27 years old, it's famously said, because there were no worlds left to conquer, as he thought. And Alexander the Great dies in 323 at the age of 32 years old, very mysteriously, we do not know how, where, in the city of Babylon.

And he did not know, of course, I don't think Alexander the Great, maybe he did, that 200 years prior, a man had had a vision of him doing exactly what we later find out he did in world history. And then out of the goat, there's not just one horn, it is broken, that's Alexander. But then we read about four horns that arise out of the goat's head. Because for about 20 years after Alexander died, in 330 down to about 310, no one could consolidate power.

And so power was divided in the Greek kingdom amongst four kings, four regional rulers across the empire. And that's, if you want to know, Cassander over Macedonia, and Lysimachus over Thrace in Asia, and Seleucus over Syria, and Ptolemy, the Ptolemaic kingdom over Egypt.

[14:16] So a quick history. Hopefully you're still sticking with me for a sec. Now, here's the point. You would expect that in a vision like this, that Alexander the Great would be the focus of this prophecy.

But he's not. Because right after that, verse 9 and following, we're back to an image we saw last week, the little horn. The little horn comes up out of one of the four horns after Alexander the Great's empire splits, the Seleucid empire over Syria and Mesopotamia, the land of Israel. And it tells, just listen to the details about this little horn. He will trample on the saints. He will become as great as the prince of hosts. That's referring to the son of God himself. He will believe himself to be that great. He will take the regular burnt offering away from the temple. He will throw the truth to the ground, the text tells us. Now, this is almost certainly referencing a man that I mentioned last week, Antiochus Epiphanes.

And this is a man who ruled one of the sections of the Greek kingdom that reigned over the lands of Israel. And he enacted a holocaust over the Jewish people.

[15:23] So in 169 AD, Antiochus Epiphanes marched on Jerusalem. It is estimated that he killed 30,000 to 40,000 Jews in a matter of two weeks around the area of Jerusalem.

He would, this prophecy says he will grasp or cast down the truth. Well, Antiochus Epiphanes for a month went around burning all the scrolls of the Torah that he could find in that season.

And in 167, I mentioned this last week, he marched into the Jerusalem temple and he dedicated the temple to Zeus. And he had coins printed with his face on it, Antiochus' face on it, that said, Antiochus Phaeus Epiphanes, which is translated Antiochus, God manifest, meaning he was announcing himself to be the God of the land, to require worship.

He looks a lot like Nebuchadnezzar. He required a spiritual formation program to paganize the whole of the Jewish, of Israel and Jerusalem, of all the Jewish people. And he ultimately desecrated the temple by sacrificing a pig in the Holy of Holies to Zeus.

This is what the New Testament refers to as the abomination of desolation. So when you come to the New Testament in Matthew and Jesus talks about the vision of the abomination of desolation, he's talking about the moment that Antiochus Epiphanes slaughtered a pig in the Holy of Holies and desolated the temple.

[16:49] And so we have this prophecy about him. And what's the point? The angel says in verse 13, this is what's coming. How long do the people have to endure that?

And the text is really all about this, that over and over again in the cycle of history, God's people endure these moments of horror in deep valleys.

Daniel's in the midst of one right here. It's gonna come again in the second century under Antiochus Epiphanes, a holocaust. And the angel says on behalf of the people, how long? And this is a prophecy about a pagan polytheist who will take over the empire and try to force pagan worship of every single believer in the empire.

And it's to say that over and over again, these prophecies in the cycle of history, that there are going to be antichrists, men of lawlessness, valleys, deep, deep valleys of suffering that people will have to walk through.

And in verse 17, the angel Gabriel says, then there will be the time of the end. And the time of the end there is not a reference to the end of history, the second coming, but instead a reference to the moment where all of a sudden relief will come, mercy will come to God's people.

[18:02] And that happens. That's 164 BC on the date 25 Kislev. That's how they did the calendar then. Exactly three years after Antiochus Epiphany sacrificed a pig to the day in the temple, a man named Judas Maccabeus, the Maccabee family in Israel, they conquered Antiochus.

And they restored worship in the temple. And they relit the candles in the temple. And that day was known as Hanukkah. So Hanukkah in the Jewish calendar is coming up soon.

And that's the event of Hanukkah, the feast of dedication, the day the temple was reclaimed for worship from Antiochus Epiphanes. And that's how it all happened. Now, the time of the end. When is the moment that God is going to finally bring relief to his people? J.R.R. Tolkien, the author of The Lord of the Rings, he wrote a great essay called On Fairy Stories. And in it, he coined this word eucatastrophe.

He features it in his works. And a eucatastrophe is a sudden reversal where you think every single hope is lost. There is no hope. And all of a sudden, a eucatastrophe occurs.

[19 : 10] E-U in Greek means good, a good catastrophe. When there is no hope, when you are in the midst of the deepest, darkest valley in your life, or in the cycle of history where God's people are under the yoke of absolute oppression, there will be a time of the end.

There will be a eucatastrophe, a sudden reversal toward the good that is totally unexpected. And that is what's being talked about. The invitation today is to be a person of enduring faith, a faith that can walk through the deepest, darkest valley and know that the prophecy of the time of the end has been spoken and is actually real.

Let me give you two reasons to endure, to have enduring faith today. It is a beautiful thing when a person professes faith in Jesus and they maybe come from maybe a harder background sometimes or sometimes having grown up in the church, no matter what, a beautiful thing when any person comes to profess faith in Christ and has saving faith in their lives, faith that justifies, faith that says, for the first time, I can say God has forgiven me of my sins.

It's a beautiful thing. We love to celebrate it here. And then there is a temptation that we forget about and that's that the road of enduring faith is very hard.

It is very tough. And there are so many moments in life that tempt us to pull away from the faith that we once professed. And I love to check in with folks who do come to faith.

[20 : 42] We've had a few last year, in the past year, who've come and professed faith for the first time. And to check in six months later and say, how are you? And most of the time what happens is they have now entered the valley of enduring faith, a faith that realizes the Christian life is not easy.

And the moment of celebration I had, of knowing my sins were forgiven, I was changed, has now entered into the season where I have to carry on and endure. And my life has actually become harder at times because of it.

And that's exactly what this prophecy is about. Let me give you the two reasons. The first is to see the power, very briefly, of predictive prophecy. There is an assurance here in just realizing how specific this prophecy is and how it was so specifically fulfilled.

And three years after the abomination of desolation, 25 Kislev Hanukkah occurs, regaining the temple, rededicating it. And in verse 14 in Daniel 8, did you notice this very specific number?

It says, how long is this going to occur? Verse 14, 2,300 mornings and evenings. How long is that? That is six years. And Antiochus Epiphanes ruled the city of Jerusalem from 169 to 164, six years.

[21 : 59] And that's just one little example in the midst of the whole, that this prophecy is so specific and is so specifically fulfilled that historical critical scholarship since the 19th century has come and said, there is no way that this was written in the 5th century or 6th century.

Instead, this text had to have been written in the 2nd century or the 1st century B.C. And the reason they say that is because they say there could be no way that a human being could write a text like this that would get the details so correct.

So just in critical scholarship amongst the Old Testament scholars, it's very important to recognize nobody questions, nobody questions that this prophecy of Daniel 8 is about Antiochus Epiphanes. No matter believing scholars, non-Christian scholars, they both agree. But the scholarship often says, well, this must have been written post-164. And why?

And the evidence does not come from the internal data in the book. Part of the book's in Aramaic. That's the language of Babylon. It seems to have been written during the time of the Babylonian kingdom. What is the reason?

[23 : 05] The reason in the scholarship is simply to say, God does not exist. Therefore, there could be no prophecy that could be this specific. And I just want to come to the believers in the room.

I know that if you're not a Christian today, you're exploring, it would take more work to convince you of this. But I want to come to the, this text is written to the believer and to the believer say, an

underappreciated reality of the Bible is the assurance of predictive prophecy. It should strengthen your faith today to know that this was so specific in the 5th century BC and that it was very fully realized in the 2nd century BC. And let me give you another instance of that. Isaiah 7, 14, Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and his name will be called Emmanuel. And that is a very specific prophecy. And it was very specifically fulfilled in the 1st century AD in the birth of Jesus Christ.

The question here is, is God the Lord of history or not? Is the God who created the world able to also tell us what's going to happen in world history? Is the God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead the same God who could give a prophecy like this and see it fulfilled in world history?

[24 : 19] And the answer is yes. I love the very difficult words, I think, to receive of a scholar named John Gray who wrote a book in 2003. He was the professor of the history of European thought at the London School of Economics.

And listen to what he says. If you believe that human beings are animals, there can be no such thing as the history of humanity, only the lives of particular humans.

If we speak of the history of the species of humanity at all, it is only to signify the unknowable sum of human lives. As with other animals, there are happy lives.

There are wretched lives. None has a meaning that lies beyond itself. Looking for meaning in history is like looking for patterns in the clouds. Nietzsche knew this, but he would not accept it. He was too trapped in the chalk circle of Christianity. Now, if you know anything about philosophy, you may know that Friedrich Nietzsche is one of the most famous atheists of world history. But John Gray said, Nietzsche even refused to say there's no such thing as history.

[25 : 25] What is history? History is a central, unified story that humanity and all the disparate events of our lives all the way back to the beginning actually have together one story called the story of humanity.

That's history. And John Gray said, if you do not believe in God, you cannot believe in history. There is no history if God doesn't exist. All there is is animals having sad lives or happy lives, but none of it means anything.

And he said, even Nietzsche refused to face what he believed. Nietzsche believed in history because he was too influenced by Christianity. You see what he's saying? He's saying, the reason we can believe, you can believe there is real history today is because God is real.

And the God who made history, who predicts history, who wrote the story can give you prophecy like this. The second assurance to endure in faith today is finally, and this is the biggest reason, is the festival of lights himself.

So Hanukkah, this prophecy is about Hanukkah, the day when Antiochus Epiphanes would be defeated in 164 B.C.

[26 : 36] And they call that Hanukkah or the Feast of Dedication or the Feast of Lights. And it was called the Feast of Lights, the Festival of Lights, because that day they went into the temple and relit the menorah, the candles in the temple, saying, true worship is back into Jerusalem.

In John, this is our final point, in John chapter 10, in John chapter 10, Jesus Christ goes to the temple. And in 10.22, we read these words, at the time of the Feast of Dedication.

That's a Greek word. If it was translated to Hebrew, it would say, at the time of the Feast of Hanukkah. Of Hanukkah. In Jerusalem, it was winter. And Jesus was walking into the temple in the colonnade of Solomon.

And you see there, Jesus enters the temple on Hanukkah. And this is what takes place. In verse 24, the people gather around Him and they say, tell us plainly, are you the Christ?

Do you see what they're asking? Christ is a Greek word. Another way to say it is, are you the epiphanies? Epiphanies means God manifest. Are you the Christ?

[27 : 44] Are you the epiphanies? You see, on the day of Hanukkah, Jesus went into the temple and they said, are you the Christ? What were they asking? They were saying, is this Antiochus epiphanies all over again?

Or is this the real anointed Messiah? That's the question they were asking. Is this the man of lawlessness? As the New Testament puts us all over again, he entered into the temple just like Antiochus, except this was Hanukkah, the day of victory from Antiochus epiphanies.

And when you come back to Daniel 8, you look at verses 9 to 11, verses 23 to 25, and you realize from the mouth of Gabriel and others that this man that is being prophesied is about Antiochus, but

it's about something far bigger.

It starts to stretch this man of lawlessness, this Antichrist, as the New Testament would put it, well beyond the moment of just the second century. And we read in a place like 1 John 1 and 2, there have been many Antichrists and there will be many more.

And Antiochus was certainly one of those. What is an Antichrist? An Antichrist is a person who regards themselves as worthy of worship, who says, I am theos epiphanies, I am God manifest.

[28 : 57] A person who maintains that belief through violence, destruction, and oppression, and a person who suppresses the true religion, true worship of God, the real worship of the real God.

And what Daniel 8 is saying is that there will be a pattern of men of lawlessness, of Antichrist throughout world history. And Antiochus Epiphanes was one of those. But in John 10, the people do not know yet who Jesus really is.

And they're saying, you say you're the Christ on the day of Hanukkah? And this is what happens.

They say, he says, the work that I do in my Father's name bears witness about me.

I will give eternal life. I and the Father are one. And how do they respond? They picked up stones to stone him to death. See, they fear exactly that. And here's the difference.

Here's how you know. In John 8, on the Festival of Lights in John 8, Jesus said, I am the light of the world. Here's how you know the difference between the Christ and the Antichrist. And it says, the Antichrist demanded the blood of many.

[30 : 01] The true Christ comes and gives his blood for the many. The Antichrist was a man of abusive power who said, if you don't worship me, I will put my boot on your neck.

And the real Christ, the God-man, gave away his power to redeem humanity. And so the question that they're wondering, who is this? Is this the Christ? Or is he like the one that came before?

And all they had to do was realize that the man who went to the cross for us is the Christ, the true epiphany. God manifest. And what this passage is inviting you to do is to see that when you look at the cross and the resurrection, you have before you Jesus Christ, the forerunner, who really has gone down to the bottom of every valley already.

So you might be here today in the midst of a deep, dark valley. God's people have been throughout the centuries very, very often. And Hebrews says it. He is the forerunner.

He has experienced every suffering that there is to experience. He has gone before you. He's gone all the way to the bottom in order to soar to the sky. The cross is the ultimate valley and the resurrection is the greatest eucatastrophe.

[31 : 17] And that's the reason where you can look up and say my Savior, my Redeemer, is the forerunner who knows what it's like to suffer so deeply as I am today. And He is the one who has experienced the time of the end.

You know, you can look at Jesus' resurrection today and say there really is a time of the end, a time where relief will come, where the burdens of this life will finally be taken away, where there will be the truest, best eucatastrophe coming in my life.

Florence Chadwick, Florence Chadwick was a woman in the middle 20th century and she was a great swimmer. She was an incredible athlete, the first to swim the English Channel across and back again, there and back again.

That sounds like a Tolkien reference. She did it. She crossed the English Channel there and back again in 1950. And then in 1952, she swam the Strait of Gibraltar, the first human to do that.

And then again in 1953, she tried to swim from the Catalina Island off the coast of California to the shore of California. That's about a 17-mile stretch and in her abilities, 17 miles was not very far.

[32 : 30] But when she tried it, there was such a thick fog on the morning that she tried it that she got 16 1/2 miles in and her mother was in the lifeboat next to her and the story says that she begged her mother, take me out of the water.

I can't keep going. And her mother said, no, keep going. You're almost there. And she refused to believe that. And so they took her out of the water. She didn't make it.

And she said later, I don't want to excuse my failure, but if I could have seen the shoreline, I know I would have made it. Now, this prophecy, like the entire Bible, is saying to us, we live in a very foggy world where the sight line of the shore, the time of the end, is not very visible to us.

And you could very much be in a moment right now where things are at their most foggy. The sight line, the time of the end, is not apparent. And this is a passage that is inviting you to have an enduring faith and say, use the faith that imagines.

What is faith? It's not by sight. The faith that imagines the shoreline, the sight line on the horizon that you cannot yet see. And the way that you've got to do that is to see the forerunner who entered into the worst valley under the worst antichrist himself, Satan, but yet experienced the eucatastrophe of the resurrection.

[33 : 53] You've got to say, the resurrection is my sight line. It's getting me through the fog. She tried it again a year later. The fog was there again.

And they kept saying to her in the lifeboat, you can't see, but the shoreline is on the horizon. And she made it. And it's a simple illustration. It's a little testament. It's nothing compared to the calling to endure in the Christian life all the way to the time of the end.

All the way. This is an invitation to an enduring faith. I'll give the last word to J.C. Ryle and the Anglican bishop. He says in his very famous book, *Holiness*, the Christian life does cost us something.

There are enemies to be overcome, battles to be fought, sacrifices to be made, in Egypt to be forsaken, a wilderness to be passed through, a cross to be carried, a road to be run.

Believers of the 6th century B.C., 2nd century B.C., 21st century A.D., 2025, Jesus Christ has gone before you. Let him be your sight line.

[35 : 00] Endure. Don't give up on the faith. Let us pray. Father, we are running a race that you've set before us. We need help. We need hope.

We need a sight line. We need the land to be visible by faith today. And so, for those today who feel like it is at its most murky, most foggy, we thank you for prophecies that are strange to modern readers like us, but yet apocalyptically encouraging, unveiling, of truths that we could have never known.

Thank you, Lord, for being the Lord of history, the Lord of prophecy, the Lord of eucatastrophe, the one who brings surprising reversals. So, we ask, Lord, that some of us today, all of us today, could rest in the great reversal of the resurrection as our hope and our sight line.

We pray that in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.