

Trusting God in Today's World

Our world has become very active in the last 2 weeks. Events are happening now that were unimaginable just two years ago. In my personal Bible reading this week, I have been reminded over and over that God's word is true, that everything He said will actually occur. He is absolutely true to His word. Nothing that God has said through His prophets will fail to be accomplished.

Isaiah 46:9-10 (NLT) "Remember the things I have done in the past. For I alone am God, and there is none like me. ¹⁰ Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish."

Pray

In the book, The Attributes of God, A.W. Tozer tried to describe God's character – His infinitude, His immensity, His goodness, His justice, His mercy, His grace, His omnipresence, His immanence, His holiness and His perfection – a bunch of big words, but our God is so great that we cannot wrap our minds around Him. And even though in our human minds, we break all these characteristics into little boxes, the truth is that God is all of these all the time. At the same time that He is merciful and gracious, He is perfect justice and holiness. He is present everywhere all the time and yet, He is with me as though I am the only one alive.

And sometimes, we just need to stop and remember who our God really is. The scripture this morning tells us of His knowledge of everything - past, present and future. Even the things that we wish He didn't know, He knows. And the truth of the matter is that He alone knows the future. Only He can tell us what will happen before it occurs. He has a plan, and it will come to pass.

And God wants us to realize that He is sovereign over everything. His wisdom is infinite. And because we know Him, we can be calm in the middle of chaos. We can rest in His perfect peace because we know the One who holds tomorrow in His hands. We are challenged to learn to trust His wisdom, the wisdom that lies behind His sovereign acts. When we rely on Him and all His attributes, we can live in contentment just like Paul wrote about in **Philippians 4:11-13** "Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. ¹² I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. ¹³ For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength." God knows what He is doing, so we can rest even when it seems that there is no rest.

I believe that God is moving the pieces around on the celestial chessboard, and one of these days, if we are watching, we will see all of God's prophecies occur just like He said.

After looking around and reading the headlines whether that is on a news channel or through some social media site, I think we can agree that what we are seeing is very similar to reading His word. Let me give you some examples: **Isaiah 42:22** says, "But His own people have been robbed and plundered, enslaved, imprisoned, and trapped. They are fair game for anyone, and have no one to protect them, no one to take them back home." Yes, I know that Isaiah was talking about what would happen when the Assyrians would conquer the northern 10 tribes and the Babylonians would conquer the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. But, it also speaks of antisemitism – "they are fair game for anyone and have no one to protect them."

It also speaks of what happened on October 7, 2023 when Hamas invaded the southern area of Israel. Hamas robbed, plundered, enslaved, imprisoned and trapped 250 hostages and killed 1,200 people.

And it's not just happening in Israel. On Friday, a terrorist rammed his vehicle into Temple Israel near Detroit, Michigan. His truck contained explosives. The synagogue was packed with children at the

time. Fortunately, no children were injured, and the man shot himself when he got pinned inside the truck.

The United States and Israel are now involved in a war with Iran. The United States tried to negotiate to get the regime to agree to stop their nuclear enrichment and to stop building ballistic missiles. Steve Witkoff, the special envoy from the US, was told by the regime that they would not stop enriching uranium. And, on the very first day of negotiations during the last week of February (26th), they declared that they had approximately 450 kg (992 pounds) of uranium enriched to 60%. That's enough enriched uranium for up to 11 nuclear bombs. According to the Institute for Strategic Risk Management, Iran could have quickly enriched to 90% within 7-10 days. Ninety percent is the level required for a nuclear weapon. Since Iran was unwilling to give up their pursuit of weaponization, Israel and the US stepped in to make sure that they cannot make nuclear weapons.

Since the beginning of the war on February 28, much of their leadership has been killed. Their supreme leader, the Ayatollah was killed in the first air strike. And his son was injured. As far as is known, the son is in a coma in a hospital. However, the clerics have announced that he is the new leader. Someone, claiming to be him, put out a statement that says that they will take revenge and do everything they can to destroy those attacking them. The Tousei TV YouTube channel states that in reality, the IRGC is now in charge. And, Tousei TV reported on Friday night that many Ayatollahs are leaving Iran for the United Kingdom and Canada. (Just a side note – an ayatollah is a high-ranking, expert cleric in Twelver Shia Islam who serves as a supreme authority on religious law, ethics, and jurisprudence. The word itself means "sign of God" in Arabic and Persian.) Additionally, the IRGC Basij units have moved their checkpoints into tunnels to avoid the IDF drones.

Iran has fired on 13 Arab states since this war broke out. They are trying to provoke those states to come to their side or at least kick the US out of their lands. However, that has backfired. On Wednesday, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2817, demanding Iran halt its missile and drone attacks on Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan. 135 countries lined up to co-sponsor the text, the largest co-sponsorship of a Security Council resolution in UN history. However, there is a glaring fact: the resolution did not call for Iran to halt its missile attacks targeting Israel's civilian centers. Somehow, the UNSC and all of the signing nations were able to give a pass for the roughly 300 ballistic missiles Iran has fired at Israeli cities, killing 13 people and wounding over 3,000. There was not a single word of condemnation for attacks that killed Israelis. And remember that the Scripture tells us that at some point, the whole world will be against Israel. I hope that doesn't include the United States, but God's word is true.

The Islamic regime has called for "death to Israel and death to America since 1979." They call Israel the little Satan and the US the big Satan. And they have created proxies throughout the Middle East to try to wipe Israel from the face of the earth. You've heard the chants in our nation of "from the river to the sea, Palestine shall be free." Unfortunately, most people chanting that sentence don't even know which river or which sea or what land they are chanting about.

Did you know that the description of the area is exactly what God promised Abraham? **Genesis 15:18** says, "I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River." In **Genesis 17:8**, God spoke to Abraham – "And I will give the entire land of Canaan, where you now live as a foreigner, to you and your descendants. It will be their possession forever, and I will be their God." **Exodus 23:31** says "And I will fix your boundaries from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the eastern wilderness to the Euphrates River". God declared in **Leviticus 25:23** that the land must never be sold on a permanent basis, "for the land belongs to Me."

Now you may say, but that was back then. It's not about now. **Isaiah 43:5-7** God is speaking to the descendants of Jacob, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will gather you and your children from east and west. ⁶ I will say to the north and south, 'Bring My sons and daughters back to Israel from the distant corners of the earth. ⁷ Bring all who claim Me as their God, for I have made them for My glory. It was I who created them.'"

And although those descendants chose idols at times and God chastised them and destroyed many, yet He says in **Isaiah 65:8-9** says, "But I will not destroy them all," says the LORD, "for just as good grapes are found among a cluster of bad ones (and someone will say, 'Don't throw them all away – some of those grapes are good!'), so I will not destroy all Israel. For I still have true servants there. ⁹ I will preserve a remnant of the people of Israel (Jacob) and of Judah to possess my land. Those I choose will inherit it and my servants will live there."

God's word is true! Folks, if God's promises to Israel are not fulfilled, then how can we know that His promises to us will be kept? But the Scripture tells us in **Numbers 23:19** that "God is not a man, so He does not lie. He is not human, so He does not change His mind. Has He ever promised and not carried it through?" You can count on God's promises. You can count on the words of His prophets.

At some point in the future, we will see Turkey swiftly attacking Iran. That comes from Daniel 8 where Daniel was told that a two-horned ram which represents the kings of Media and Persia (Iran) is attacked by a shaggy male goat that represents the first king of Yavan. Your Bible probably translates it as Greece. However, the word in Hebrew is Yavan. Yavan was an ancient empire that primarily encompassed the coasts of Turkey and the islands nearby. One huge key to understanding that prophecy is the time stamp. It occurs at the time of the end, the very end of time, the time of wrath (v **17, 19**)

Also keep your ears alert to know when the Israelis begin building the temple and when they start the daily sacrifices. Daniel is given the specific number of days from the time that those sacrifices are stopped and the time of the desecration of the temple – 1,290 days.

In fact, I think that we might be very wise to be watching, particularly during the times that have historical significance to Israel. For instance, this current war, Operation Epic Fury/Roaring Lion, which started on February 28 did not start exactly on Purim which was on March 2-4.; however, it started within 3-4 days of Purim. And there was a total lunar eclipse at Purim. Why? -because God wanted to make sure that we didn't miss the importance of this operation. And watch for the 9th of Av, generally around the first part of August. That's when both temples were destroyed. Additionally, it's important to be aware that God selected special days. God is not trying to confuse us. He's trying to show us that He alone is God.

Leviticus 23 gives us all the appointed times. The first feast day is Passover which occurs on God's calendar on the 14th day of the first month. On our calendar it is April 3 this year. Just a side note, Israel has already been threatened by the Palestinian Liberation Organization that they better not try to offer a lamb on the Temple Mount this year or even more chaos will erupt. The day after Passover is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That feast continues for seven days. The Day of First Fruits (Resurrection Sunday) this year is April 5th. Fifty days later is Shavuot or Pentecost. That's May 24th this year. Those are the four spring feasts. Jesus fulfilled each of those feasts to the day and hour. On Passover, He was placed on the cross at 9 am and died at 3pm, at the time of the evening sacrifice in the temple. He rose three days later on the Day of First Fruits. And He poured out the Holy Spirit on Shavuot at 9 am as the high priest was waving the two loaves of bread – barley and wheat – before the LORD.

The fall feasts begin with the Day of Shouting or Trumpets, Yom Teruah. That occurs on the first day of the 7th month and will occur in September. Ten days after Yom Teruah will be the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. This is the most holy day because it is when, each year, the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies that we have been talking about, to put the blood on the ark cover for the atonement of the sins of the nation. Five days later will be the Feast of Tabernacles or Sukkot when the people are to live in sukkahs to remember when God brought them out of Egypt and provided for them in the wilderness. They lived in sukkahs during that time. Those were temporary shelters that were quickly taken down in order to move when the Cloud of God's presence moved. Sukkot is celebrated for seven days. The next day is Shmini Atzeret, a celebration of new beginnings. And by the way, Shmini Atzeret occurred on October 7, 2023.

All of these Feasts of the LORD are shadow pictures of what God was/is going to be doing on those days. Just as Jesus fulfilled the first four Feasts, He will fulfill the last three. God is fully invested in us knowing when He was acting.

Let me bring this to a close by saying that although sometimes we think that God is not working, we need to be confident that His word is true. Jesus told us in Matthew 24 that there would be wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. "Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately. ⁷ Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world. ⁸ But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come."

We are very much in the birth pains, in my estimation. Instead of being scared, I encourage you to look up for your Redeemer is coming. It will still be a while, and things will become more chaotic because Satan is doing everything he can to fight against God. But, the Scripture tells us that God, the Creator, will be the victor! We can count on that fact!

It's time for us to be all in for our Lord Jesus! **1 Peter 5:7** tells us to give all our worries and cares to God for He cares for us. Paul says, Rejoice in the LORD always. We must be intentional in our love for and giving our praise and worship to Him. He is our deliverer!