

The Significance of "Selah"

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

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It is my privilege tonight particularly for those of you that are watching us online or in a virtual world to welcome you to the 316 Center here at First Baptist Church of Opelika for the very first time in 12 weeks we are having Sunday night church with people in the room. Wow. [applause]

That being said, as we kind of begin tonight, just kind of a, shall I say, an introduction to the evening, you may have noticed that things look a little bit different in the room. We are here in the 316 Center, it is vacation Bible school week and so maybe you're here in person or maybe you're on the other side of the camera, you may live an entire continent away from us but you can be part of vacation Bible school 2020 because it's all virtual and it begins tomorrow morning but everything's preloaded, you can do it at your time schedule, whatever fits you best. You know, one of the things that we've learned walking through a global pandemic is that Americans for the most part watch television, what's called time-shifted. In other words, we watch a program at a different time than it was originally aired. Some of the data is showing up to 96% of the time we don't watch it when it was originally aired and so vacation Bible school typically would be at a certain time and a certain location but this year you can time-shift VBS. So whatever is best for your family, all the materials are available online. I invite you to be a part of it beginning live tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock. Vacation Bible school. Can you tell what the theme is from behind me? It's not that difficult, is it? So we are going to be under construction.

Now as in regards to tonight, you may be wondering why the 316 Center? Why are we in here to begin our Sunday evening services? Because one of the things we've learned, it's easier to space with chairs than it is with pews and so this is just kind of to acclimate us in the room of kind of what does that distance look like, what feels comfortable because as soon as you get in the pews in a couple of weeks, all of a sudden there's not the barrier of that other chair, and so this is just kind of an acclimation process.

Tonight obviously is our "Sunday night service" and there's gonna be one thing that is missing and one thing that is added. Let me explain. One thing you'll notice tonight is we're not going to be singing together, alright? There's not much music tonight and one of the reasons is not only good common sense but good science, is there's a lot of study behind the volume of air that we project when we sing. You know, some folks are saying

that some of you who like to sing really loud are projecting air up to 37 feet when you sing which means you're blowing whatever you've got over everybody in the room. And so as we begin a very slow strategic return to the campus, what we know as congregational singing will in turn return but not the first night and so I hope you'll understand. If you came expecting to sing together tonight, not the first night but I promise you it is coming. Let's just get comfortable with our space, then we'll get comfortable with singing, alright?

The last thing before we get started. It has been noted to me numerous times that in our online broadcast that very few if ever do I quote, "offer a public prayer." Let me share with you why. When you are in an empty room, it is really hard to preach. It's really really hard to pray. To pray out loud on behalf of people you can't see is really hard. Now the first week that we did a virtual worship service, I did pray and I went home and I watched it and I've never felt more like a televangelist in all my life watching me pray with an empty room, but tonight I know there's many of you on the other side of the camera but it's not an empty room tonight. So as we pray as a congregation, as we start our service tonight, when you publicly pray, you're praying in conjunction with others and to be honest with you, for the last 12 weeks I didn't know where you were or what was going on, for all I knew you were rushing back from the coffee maker getting your coffee ready for the service. But tonight we are gathered and so I think it is very appropriate that we begin our first time back in 12 weeks with a very significant time of corporate prayer.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we just thank you. It's been a long 12 weeks and in some respects we're so grateful that we've had the technology to do what we've done. You've allowed us to reach the East Alabama area as well as the uttermost parts of the earth. Lord, you've allowed us as a body of believers to become a congregation that is numerically larger scattered than it ever was gathered. You brought people from other states, other countries and even other continents but, God, tonight we recognize that we miss the fellowship, we miss the face-to-face interaction, we miss the smiles, God, we miss the laughter. Forgive us, O God, if we took it for granted. Forgive us if we took being a part of a dynamic church in the flesh for granted. Forgive us, O God, for the times that we were just too tired or we had more pressing things and we thought something else was of greater importance. Lord, tonight it's a fresh reminder of how valuable the gathering of the saints is, it's a reminder of how important it is for us to see one another, to smile and to look into each other's eyes. God, again thank you for the privilege and the opportunity and as we study your word, as we look back at words you inspired 3,000 years ago through an individual who was the king literally of the world at the time, Lord, I pray that you would make it as relevant to our daily lives as possible. Thank you that you have taken your word, you have preserved it from this generation and forever, that, Lord, it speaks to our lives just as much as it did King David's. May you teach us, may you instruct us, if necessary, God, may you reprove us and rebuke us so that we might be the men and women you've called us to be when we depart in a few moments. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

This may sound strange but it felt really good to pray out loud in public again. I have missed that as much as anything.

Well, tonight I do want to encourage you to turn to the book of Psalms and we're gonna begin in Psalm 9. Now I know many of you are aware but some of you may not, that we are currently in a Bible reading plan. There's about a year left in our Bible reading plan and we're gonna spend the next couple of months in Psalms and Proverbs as we walk through what we often refer to as the wisdom literature in the Old Testament. I have lost count of the number of you either by email, text message or even face-to-face conversations when the privilege allows, that have just been, shall I say, marveled at just the timing that God has had with his word through what we are walking through. I mean, think about it, that here we were studying Nehemiah and the rebuilding of a city when we're talking about the rebuilding of our country at the same time. Here we are, Esther going back and rebuilding at the same time and now we're walking through the Psalms. As I mentioned this morning, the Psalms are, if you allow me, it's almost the bipolar section of the Bible. You know, one day David is just, he's celebrating the Lord, he's dancing, and the next day he's down in the dumps and yet it's so much like our world today. You know, I don't know if this happens to you but it does me, a lot of times the tone of my day is established by the first news feed I see to let me know how the day is "going to go" which is why the word of God needs to be the first thing that is entered into my mind when I wake up in the morning, and I've learned that if I allow anything else other than God's word to enter first, it unfortunately sets a, shall I say, a negative tone for my day.

But the book of Psalms could not be more appropriate because we live in a world that is changing not just month by month, week by week, day by day, it is hour by hour now and based on the news that we hear, it causes emotions to well up in us just like King David. There are times he celebrates great victories, there are times he wonders if he's gonna experience great defeat. But one of the things that I've shared with the Psalms is that over and over again you have this layered effect. You have these incredible prophecies about who Jesus Christ will be, the Messiah, the coming Redeemer of humanity, and then on the other side you have these what we would call Second Coming promises involving his physical return that is yet to be in the future. So as we gather for the next few weeks whether here in person or online, we're gonna look at Sunday morning at Psalms through a First Coming lens, and then on Sunday night look at Psalms through a Second Coming lens. So tonight is gonna seem a little bit different. It's going to be very Bible studyish, so to speak, more than sermonic and we're gonna deal with a lot of passages.

So let me give you a warning in advance, we're going to begin in Psalm 9, are y'all ready for the other two passages because they're not easy to find. That's why we print a table of contents. Now some of you have electronic devices and you're like, "Bring it on. I got this. All I gotta do is type it." We're going to be in 2 Kings 14 and this is gonna be the real kicker, y'all ready? Habakkuk. That's right, the minor prophet Habakkuk. It's the Southern Baptist's favorite book of the Bible. Please note my sarcasm. But that being said, tonight we're gonna begin in Psalm 9 and we're gonna look at a very strategic word.

You know, it's interesting that the Bible states over and over again that's it not just its precepts, it's not just its truths, that it is that every word is critical. In fact, Jesus Christ in the temptation with Satan in the wilderness, he said that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God. And I think sometimes we just need a reminder that each and every word that we've got in Scripture is that important and is that critical, and tonight as you see in the title, we're going to focus on a word that the overwhelming amount of the time that it's used in the Bible is used in the Psalms, it's used twice in Psalm 9, it's used a multitude of different places, and it is the word "Selah." Now that's one of those strange words that you'll see it at the end of a verse particularly in Psalms, but when we get to Habakkuk 3, it's actually utilized in the middle of the verse and so I want to look at the significance of the word "Selah" because I believe what it'll help us do as we walk through the Psalms, now you know there's 150 of them, as we walk through the Psalms every now and then you're going to be reading and this word's gonna pop up and every time it does, it looks completely out of context. I mean, you're just reading, you're reading and all of a sudden it says, "Selah," and you're like, "What is that?" My desire, my hope tonight is to show you what I believe to be a significant understanding of this word so that as you're walking through the Psalms and you see the word, it'll make you kind of take a step back and go, "Oh, I didn't realize this was a strategic Second Coming passage," because oftentimes we're reading about deliverance and we're reading about God being our comfort and our shield and our refuge, and those are all very personal to us but then when the word "Selah" is used you realize, "Oh, there may be something more to this."

Psalm 9, if you'll indulge me, I'm gonna read all 20 verses. The word "Selah" does not show up until the 16th and the 20th verse but the fact that I've already kind of put the cart before the horse, put your Second Coming hat on for just a moment and think of what we're reading in light of the Second Coming. It says,

1 I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works. 2 I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High. 3 When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence. 4 For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right. 5 Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever. 6 O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them. 7 But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. 8 And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness. 9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. 10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee. 11 Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings. 12 When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble. 13 Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my

trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death: 14 That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation. 15 The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. 16 The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah. 17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. 18 For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. 19 Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight. 20 Put them in fear, O LORD: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.

Interesting. I gave you kind of the cart before the horse and as you're reading the language did you not have visions of the book of Revelation? But as we're reading the Psalms, oftentimes or for the predominantly most of the time, we read it as a song, do we not? We read it as a celebration and a declaration to the Lord and oftentimes there's constructs there and there's ideas there that we understand what they are but what we just read is a very good description of a lot of events of what you and I know as the Second Coming.

So tonight the thing I want to do is just three very simple things. Some items to consider regarding this word "Selah." Then we're gonna talk about in context when it's used scripturally. And then we're gonna go back into Psalm 3 and 4 and 7 and so some case studies of how it's utilized through the Psalms so hopefully it can kind of give you a guide in the days ahead as you're reading through the Psalms when you see this word to kind of take a step back and go, "Oh, let's look at this through the 'Second Coming' lens."

Let's think about some items to consider. What about the quantity? What we know as the word "Selah" is only used 74 times in the entire Old Testament. That's it, 74 times. It seems pretty significant except for the fact that 71 of those times are in the Psalms. So 39 of the 150 Psalms utilize this word. So the overwhelming majority of the time that it is used, it's used in the book of Psalms. What's interesting in the book of Psalms there's a unique absence. It is not found between Psalms 110 and 139. Now I know you're thinking to yourself, "Why is that significant? What's the importance there?" Well, those of a, shall I say, a Hebrew or a Jewish background typically take the 150 Psalms and they divide them into five distinct sections. There's five "books" of Psalms. And when they do so, they label or categorize them according to the first five books of the Bible, books of Moses, the Pentateuch, the Torah, in other words, the first section is lined up with Genesis, the second with Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and then ultimately Deuteronomy.

You say, "Well, why is that significant?" Because if you look at the Psalms as divided by those with a Jewish and Hebrew background, the only section, the only section of the Psalms that does not contain the word "Selah" is the section that lines up with the book of Numbers or what we know as the wilderness experience. You say, "Well, why is that critical?" If this word has a significant Second Coming, shall I say, meaning and application, then it wouldn't apply to the wilderness experience, would it? Because that is

not the Promised Land. That's not the culmination. What was the wilderness? The wilderness was, shall I say, the waiting period. And so how can we celebrate and anticipate that which we know has been delayed? Remember the Lord said until this generation that didn't believe has expired, you're not going across the River Jordan.

And so I find it interesting that this word is used most prolifically in the Psalms, 71 out of 74 times; it's in specifically 39 Psalms but it is not contained in what we know as that section that lines up with the book of Numbers. The other three times that it is utilized is in the book of Habakkuk 3. We'll get there in just a moment. But what is significant for us tonight is the difference between a translation and a transliteration. Now for those of you who like to play Scrabble, there's a lot of points in those words so you might want to write them down. A translation is when you take a word from a language and you bring it into another language. When you do so, it is spelled different, it sounds different, it is different. You're translating a word from Spanish to English, from French to Italian, whatever it may be. In biblical context, you're taking a word in the Old Testament from Hebrew into English. Well, the word "Selah" is not a translated word, it's what we call a transliteration. Guess how it's spelled in Hebrew? Just like it is in English because we didn't translate it, we just took it as it stood and kept it in the same form.

Now that may not seem significant to you but there are some other words in the Old Testament that we did the exact same thing with. One of those words is "Bethel." Now Bethel is the place, if you'll remember, where Jacob wrestled with the Lord, he had that famous vision in the night where he held on and said, "I'm not gonna leave until I'm blessed," and he left with a hip that was out of place. He named that place Bethel which in Hebrew means "house of God," and it was always called Bethel and if you'll look in your Bibles, we call it Bethel as well. We did not bring it into English as "house of God" because that's a phrase that people used all the time. On the Sabbath they went into the house of God. They wanted to make a distinction between the geographical place Bethel and a religious opportunity, "house of God," so they just left it in Hebrew and brought it over into the English using the same letters but not changing it into a "English word."

Another interesting word we've done with that is "manna." Remember when Krispy Kreme comes from the sky during the Old Testament? They go out in the morning, they retrieve all that they need, the day before the Sabbath they get twice as much that'll last on the Sabbath even though in a normal situation it would grow moldy and it would not satisfy and it could not nourish. Do you know what the word "manna" means? It means "the food of angels" is what it means. But yet we have kept it "manna" because we want to designate that that event was a wilderness experience alone, and it cannot be brought over into any other context, so to speak.

So when we transliterate, it's strategic because we want to focus in on Bethel, this one place and Jacob and the celebration, manna, this one experience, this supernatural food. There's another word that you may be surprised that we haven't translated that's actually transliterated. It's the word "Sabbath." When we talk about the Sabbath day, the commandment to keep it holy, that has not been translated into the other languages. We

just left it in Hebrew because it was according to the book of Exodus 32, it was a sign for the Jewish people and so we have left it as it was.

Now I know why you're thinking, "Why is this so important?" Can anybody guess what the other word is in the Old Testament? Selah. We did not translate it into English. Now for those who desire to and there's nothing wrong with necessarily doing so, most of the time we translate it meaning "pause; breath; take a step back; recapture your thoughts." Now this makes perfect sense in a musical construct, does it not? We are in Psalms, correct, and in Psalm what do you do? You sing them and anybody who knows anything about singing knows you have to take a breath. I mean, you have to. You cannot hold a note on forever. It's impossible. But what's interesting is Selah is only used 71 times in 39 Psalm, does that mean that in the other Psalm you never breathe? So it cannot be limited to this translation of taking a breath or taking a pause, I want to open up the possibility to night that there is something more significant.

Now I mentioned the word is only used 74 times, 71 times in the book of Psalms, three times in the book of Habakkuk, we'll get there in just a moment, but I want you to turn back to 2 Kings, 2 Kings 14. We have an interested scenario. Now I mentioned to you it's only used 74 times. As in the Psalms, as in Habakkuk where it comes to the end of a verse or even in the middle of the verse, there is one very unique, special place that it is also utilized but when it is utilized it is done so not to invoke a break, not to invoke a pause, not in the middle of a "sentence," but it is actually a name of a place where a very significant event takes place.

2 Kings 14, we have what we know as the divided kingdom. We have the tribes in the north, the tribes in the south. Obviously we originally had Saul, then David, then Solomon. Now they are divided and they're about to go to war again with each other as they often did. Now we find ourselves here just a little ways before what we know as the Babylonian captivity, but in verse 7, I'm not gonna read it necessarily in context, you'll get the gist thereof, it says,

7 He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.

Interesting that the very first mention that we have of this word "Selah" is a place named salt that destruction took place when 10,000 people descended on it. Now you may not find that unique. I do because in the book of Genesis we have a story where someone is in sin and looks back and they are turned into a pillar of, what? Salt. It is a place of judgment.

Notice it calls it the place of the salt. It says there were 10,000 that gathered. Interesting in the book of Jude it says that Elijah one day will come with his 10,000 to execute and exercise, you guessed it, judgment. And so in this little verse that we have in 2 Kings, we have a strategic place on the map that even though it is renamed forevermore, that it is a place of destruction, it is a place of salt, it has a numerical value eerily familiar with this

judgment mentioned in the book of Jude. The parallel passage if you're interested in 2 Chronicles 25 and calls it also a place of destruction or a place of judgment.

Interesting. I'm not negating the musical pause within the Psalms but the very first mention that we have in the Bible of this word "Selah" actually means judgment or destruction or the place thereof. Now some of your Bibles, for whatever reason they deem fit, they will actually leave the "h" off of the word "Selah." It'll just say s-e-l-a, and you may have one of those study Bibles that has a footnote at the bottom and make mention that it means "the place of the rock," okay, versus destruction. Well, in Psalm 118:22 it says Jesus is the head of the corner, he is the head stone. In other words, how many times do we have in the Bible where Jesus is called the rock? In the book of 1 Corinthians 10 it talks about that that rock referring back to the exodus experience, that rock was Jesus. And so that being said, it doesn't matter whether you put an "h" on it or not, you've got a place of destruction, you've got a place of a rock which is similitude to Jesus Christ. That being said, the very first mention that we have of this word, there is a destruction, there is death and there is the imagery of salt which at least in the book of Genesis was the judgment of God.

Now let's fast-forward to the book of Habakkuk. Now I gave y'all 20 minutes warning to find Habakkuk. The table of contents will help you out. It's one of those minor prophet books that only contains a few chapters in it and it is difficult at best to find, but in the book of Habakkuk 3, we have three references to what we know as this word "Selah." Now remember in 2 Kings we have a place of destruction, we have a place of judgment. I want you to notice with me in Habakkuk 3, I'm gonna begin, I'm gonna read verses 2 through 5, there's three sections where this word is used, and then we're gonna go back to the Psalms so that we can impact hopefully your daily reading. Verse 2 of Habakkuk 3 says,

2 O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy. 3 God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. 4 And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power. 5 Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet.

Interesting that the word "Selah" is used. Habakkuk is not a song. It's not a choral presentation. It's a declaration of prophecy. It's not at the end of the verse that would signal some type of pause if we looked at it that way, it's actually in the middle thereof and it's in the context where it talks about the Lord coming in the brightness of his coming.

How many times have we seen that imagery in the Bible? How about Matthew 17, the Mount of Transfiguration where Jesus was with Moses and Elijah and his raiment changes as bright as the sun. Malachi 4, Jesus is called the sun, s-u-n, of righteousness. And in Revelation 1 when the Apostle John sees him in a very different way than he's

ever seen him before, he says his raiment shone as bright as the sun, s-u-n. And yet in Revelation 1:8, it says when he descends, when he comes in that famous Second Coming experience, it says that everyone who reviled him shall see him in the brightness of his glory. And yet right in the midst of this, this word "Selah" is utilized.

Go forward into verse 9, it says,

9 Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. 10 The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high. 11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear.

When you hear passages that talk about the sun and the moon standing still, there's a cross reference to the book of Joel 2 but they're all prophetic and they're seen displayed where? The book of Revelation. That famous events that we see poured out in that famous last book of the Bible, the sun stands still, the moon stands still, but notice there in verse 10, it says that the mountains will respond, they tremble. You know, in the book of Isaiah right there in chapter 40, it talks about that when Jesus Christ physically returns at his Second Coming, it says that he will bring the mountains down, he will bring the valleys up, he will take the rivers that are crooked and he will make them straight. The same image that we have here in Habakkuk and yet what I want to focus on is right there in the middle of it is this word "Selah." Why would there be a pause there? Why would there be a break? It's not a song, per se, and it's not even at the end of the verse, it's tucked there right in the middle.

Then when you get to verse 12, it says,

12 Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.

What does that sound like? It sounds like Armageddon, does it not? You march through the land. You destroy the heathen.

13 Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.

Then it continues, "Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages," and it just continues this imagery and the reason I want to focus on that is it is that famous event that we know as Armageddon when Jesus physically returns, when he touches the earth, when he destroys the heathen and his enemies that ultimately brings this culmination to the salvation of his people and there, verse 13, is this word again.

Now what have we done tonight? We've gone into 2 Kings, we've gone in the book of Habakkuk outside of Psalms and shown that the four times that this word is used, it is surrounded by destruction, it is surrounded by judgment, and there is imagery very clearly of what you and I would call the Second Coming. So that being said let's go back into Psalms and do some case studies.

We're gonna begin in Psalm 3 because in your Bible reading plan this week there were actually four of the 39 Psalms that utilized what we know as this word "Selah." In Psalm 3, by the way, you may find the words very familiar, there's a very famous choral anthem piece entitled "Thou O Lord" that is a direct, it comes directly from Psalm 3, but I'm gonna read verses 1 through 4 of Psalm 3. It says,

1 LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. 2 Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah. 3 But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. 4 I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

Now am I the only one that can hear the song being sung in the background, that famous choral anthem? I could just hear it being sung because those are the words that we've heard, you know, with dozens and hundreds of people declaring those very words. But what I find interesting is in the first three verses, "Many will say of my soul, there is no help in God. Many will say that there is no way you're gonna be redeemed, there's no way you're gonna be helped. But I lifted my head." Verse 4, "I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill." As you look at the Psalms through a "Second Coming" lens, you know, there is a time and if you go to the book of Revelation 12, there's a time coming for what we call the people of God, the Jewish people. According to Romans 11, what we know as the time of the Gentiles and I know I'm giving a whole lot of prophetic stuff upfront so just work with me, the time of the Gentiles will come to a close, and what we see in the book of Revelation are the 12 tribes resurfacing again, we see these famous two witnesses, we see the temple being rebuilt. It's got a very very Jewish flavor, but in Revelation 12 which, by the way, happens to be one of what we call the parentheticals, meaning it comes out of the chronology of Revelation, you can't say, "Oh, that's the third trumpet or that's the fourth vial," it kind of pulls itself out therein, it gives this history of what we would call spiritual warfare and from the beginning of chapter 12 even in the book of Genesis to the very end, and you know what we discover? In Revelation 12 beginning in verse 12, the people of God who we know as the Jewish people, in a time period that Jesus Christ himself in Revelation 24 called the great tribulation, are running from an individual who we commonly refer to as the Antichrist, and they find themselves for 3 ½ years trapped in the wilderness. Now does this sound familiar to the Old Testament? In the wilderness? Trapped? Nowhere to go? No food to find? You know what the Bible says? In Revelation 12, that the Lord supernaturally feeds them again. He provides for them when they cannot provide for themselves.

Why is that important? "I cried unto the LORD with my voice, he heard me out of his holy hill." Where did the manna come from? The manna came from heaven, did it not?

Now I understand that Psalm 3 is an incredible passage for our everyday life. When we're walking through struggles and difficulties, when we feel like nobody hears us and nobody cares and we just scream and holler and it doesn't get anything done and God comes and delivers us. But yet we have this word "Selah" that's being used and as I've hopefully shown in these other passages, there's a very clear Second Coming judgment approach to it, and so when we look at Psalm 3, I think we've got some evidence that it's not only describing a time of redemption and rescue but giving us an additional insight to a very significant event that's gonna take place one time in the future.

Now let's go to chapter 4. For the sake of time, I'm just gonna walk through these. It says,

1 Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. 2 O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing [or shall we say delusion]? Selah. 3 But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

Interesting, we have another time of distress but that word "Selah" is there, is it not? And right before it, it says how long will you turn glory into shame? How long will you love vanity and seek after leasing or seek after what we might call delusion? There's a very famous passage in the New Testament found in 2 Thessalonians 2. It's probably the greatest discourse that we have on a character that we commonly refer to as the Antichrist. You know, I'm sure that many of you are familiar with this but the word "antichrist" doesn't even take place in the book of Revelation. He's called the beast. The term "antichrist" is actually used in 1 Thessalonians, 1 John, I apologize. In 2 Thessalonians, he's called the son of perdition. Do you know what he's also called? If this isn't apropos for today, I do not know, he's called the man of lawlessness. The one who desires that there be no order, there be no structure, there be no rules, and there be no law. Everybody do as they wish. Can we agree that there's a spirit of lawlessness in the world today? We are seeking an environment that says no rules, no regulations, just do as I choose. Folks, we are setting up a structure that he can easily walk into, trust me. But it says that the world will fall into his trap, and it talks about the fact that we, and I know I'm paraphrasing here, we as believers, we're gonna be caught up with the Lord, it says that they're gonna believe a lie, there's gonna be a strong delusion that comes upon those who buy into the Antichrist system so much that they're gonna believe that when he walks in the temple and declares that he's God, that he really is.

Now by the way, you know the term "antichrist" doesn't mean red suit, horns and a tail, it means not the Messiah, is what it means. The Antichrist has a Messiah complex. The Antichrist is going to come with signs and wonders and try to convince humanity he has the answers to all of their problems. He can solve all of their differences. He can take all of the inequalities and make them equal. Isn't that what we hear every day being cried out from our world? "That's what we want. That's what we desire." And don't hear me wrong, I'm all for equality and I'm all for those things but the difference is it's with delusion. He says, "How long will you seek after leasing? How long will you seek after delusion?"

Selah." I find it interesting, here's this word again right there in the context of humanity that falls into this great delusion, they fall into this great trap.

Fast forward, if you will, to Psalm 7. Psalm 7:1-6, again, we're gonna see this word "Selah" again. It says,

1 O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me: 2 Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver. 3 O LORD my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; 4 If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:) 5 Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah. 6 Arise, O LORD, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded.

Interesting that you have a case being pleaded of somebody saying, "I'm being accused of wrong and I didn't do any wrong." Is that not what the Antichrist does to the people of God in that horrible time known as the tribulation? They simply do the things of God and yet it says that if they don't take the mark of the beast they can't buy, they can't sell, they can't live, they can't do commerce, and yet they are the innocent ones, they are the ones who are actually doing the things of God but they are criticized by the enemies of God. And yet what does it say here? Your wrath, O God, your judgment will come.

You know, the Bible does declare in the book of Revelation and in other passages that there is a day coming where the Lord is going to come and judge. Now we famously call it Armageddon. It's there in Revelation 16 and chapter 19. The reason we call it Armageddon is because that's where it takes place. It's also called the Valley of Megiddo or Jezreel, and I'm looking in the faces of many of you who've been with me over to that part of the world and it is an amazing sight. You go to the northern, shall I say, I guess fortress that Solomon had in the greatness of his day, and you look north. It's interesting where you find yourself, that famous place known as Armageddon is really what I consider the center of the world. You say, "Why is it the center of the world?" Because to your east is Asia, to your west is Europe, and to your south is Africa. That's pretty centered if you ask me, and yet there in the middle of all of it is a giant field that man has not intervened and it looks like, I mean, we're talking there's mountains and rocks everywhere, it looks like that somebody has taken a massive hot butter knife and just carved out a flat, huge, massive battlefield right there in the middle. I mean, it's flat as central Texas, I mean right there in the middle of Israel. And by the way, if you've ever been to Israel, there is nothing flat there except Armageddon. That's it. I mean, everything else is a hill.

So there we find this place where the Lord judges, where the Lord takes him and those who were contrary to him and contrary to his people, and he finally judges them and yet here we go right there in the middle of it is this word "Selah."

Last but not least, we've already read Psalm 9. I'm not gonna re-read it but I want to close on this because it has the clearest sections. In fact, when you read verses 1 through 6, if you read it through Second Coming lenses it sounds just like Armageddon. In verse 3 it talks about the enemies that were gathered against that perish at his sight, which is exactly what happens at Armageddon. There in verse 5 you've destroyed the wicked, thou hast cast them, their name out forever and ever. At the end of what we know as the battle of Armageddon, where do those individuals go? They go to the bottomless pit. And so you have this imagery of God's wrath and God's destruction and God's judgment on those that are contrary to him. But then you look in verse 7, look at the first word, "But, But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment." That's interesting because at least from our perspective, we've never had a time in history where God has sat on the throne on planet earth, have we? No. But is it coming? Oh yeah. What until we get to Psalm 110, the Lord is going to inspire David to write these words, "That thy throne, that you will sit on thy throne forever." There is coming a day sometime in the future Jesus is gonna return, he's gonna sit on his throne and look at verse 8, "he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness. The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble." For those who refuse that famous mark, for those that are there when that time period begins, is he not a refuge? Is he not those that have been oppressed and those that have struggled so long under the tutelage of this Antichrist figure, he judges in righteousness, in uprightness because God himself is in the midst of his creative order.

When you get to verse 11 it says, "Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings. When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble. Have mercy upon me, O LORD; in my trouble." Interesting that these people who he's cast out all of a sudden says, "Oh, he hasn't forgotten them. He has remembered them."

Can I give you a quick chronology of what we know as these end time events? There is gonna be a time where the Lord descends at this famous battle of Armageddon. Then after doing so and his enemies are defeated, they're locked in the bottomless pit for a thousand years, he reigns on the earth. Do y'all remember what happens immediately thereafter? Satan is loosed for a little season, there's a little thing called Gog and Magog but then the final judgment takes place. It says there in Revelation 20 beginning at verse 10, and I saw that all of the creative order had been dismissed in a ball of fire. Prophecy as spoken by 2 Peter 3. The Lord was seated on his throne and I saw the great and the small, rich and poor stand before him and the books were opened. Those that were written in the book of life went into everlasting life but those that were judged according to their works, it says they were sent ultimately into what the Bible calls the lake of fire. You have this section here where it talks about God judging those who he's already gained victory over in the previous verses, then when you get to verse 17, the wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God for the needy shall not always be forgotten and the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever. Arise, O Lord, let not man prevail. Let the heathen be judged in thy sight. Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.

What happens after that final judgment? Eternity begins. How does this passage begin? They turned them into hell, and the reason I wanted to draw your attention there in Psalm 9 is we actually see, in my opinion, a layout of the chronology of Second Coming events that just so happens to be surrounded by two references to this word "Selah" which in 2 Kings is destruction, in Habakkuk is surrounded by all this Second Coming imagery.

Now as we have exhausted a multitude of Scriptures, I want you to hear me clearly. When you wake up tomorrow morning and you open up the book of Psalms, it is going to speak to your life as you're living it right now. Whatever you're dealing with, troubles that you've got at work, at home, relationships, economics, everything that's happening, it is going to speak to that into your life. At the same time, understand that it is addressing the issues that King David walked through 3,000 years ago. I find that comforting. If King David is going to struggle, if King David is gonna doubt, if King David is gonna question can God really deliver me, doesn't that make you feel a little better when you have those same struggles? That this man who was after God's own heart, this man who the Lord called, this man who even today the city of Jerusalem is still named after, if he struggled and he doubted and he had to process some things, then okay, I'm in good company here.

And so those are those everyday practical applications but it's going to happen this week, you're going to be reading through the Psalms and it's gonna be talking about distress and struggles and good and bad, and all of a sudden this word's gonna pop up, Selah, when that happens, don't neglect what it means for your own life but go back and read it again and look at it through the "Second Coming" lenses of Scripture because every single time you see "Selah" used in the Psalms, the imagery that is used there is very clearly Second Coming imagery.

Now oftentimes it can feel like we're going through that stuff in our personal life, can it not? But just from a prophetic standpoint, so as you're walking through the Psalms, obviously they're great to sing, they're very applicable to our lives but at the end of the day there are some of them that are very clearly overtly using Second Coming imagery that may give us clarity on thoughts in regards to prophecy, but more than anything give us assurance. What have we read over and over and over tonight? The wicked are judged. The righteous are delivered. Those who rebel against God face the consequences thereof, and those who trust in God are taken care of. Have we not read that over and over again just in different language all throughout these Psalms? And really that's the theme thereof.

You know, today one of the things that is so difficult in our lives is we don't know who to trust. Maybe I'm the only one but when you get information, do you question if the information is legitimate? Do you question if it's accurate? Is it actually a portrayal of what actually took place or is it fabricated or is it fake, is it this, is it that? And oftentimes we question even sources that we thought were reliable. I want you to notice this very last statement, I'll close on this, it says that the nations may know themselves to be but men. In other words, it doesn't matter our academic pursuits, it doesn't matter our financial

success, at the end of the day we as humanity are but men. We're not God and we don't have the ultimate answers to the ultimate problem of our life known as sin, only God can solve and address that.

So tomorrow as you begin to walk through the Psalms whether it's through a Second Coming lens or just the struggles of your life, please know the Lord will never leave you, he will never forsake you. David cried out, the Jewish people cried out, "God, can you?" And what did we read? "He delivered me from his holy hill. He heard me from Zion. He came. He delivered. He rescued me." Now will that always happen in every situation that you face in life? I wish I could say it will but there is coming a time for those of us who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, that we're gonna receive our ultimate redemption, we're gonna see our ultimate recovery, we're gonna have our ultimate, shall we say, restoration in life. At the end of the day, that's what should truly matter in our lives.

Now I know that we find ourselves tonight in somewhat of a hybrid environment. We have probably many more on the other side of the camera that are even in this room, but maybe you're in the room, maybe you're on the outside of the room and maybe you're one of those individuals who says, "Man, I need to talk to somebody. I need to have a conversation with somebody." Do me a favor, there is actually a number that you can text. Now for those of you that are in the room, can we have some fun tonight? Everybody get out your phones. You don't hear this in church much. Get out your phones. You know you've got them. You know you've got them. Because maybe you're that person even in this room who says, "You know what? I'm really struggling with some stuff. I need to talk with somebody. I need to pray with somebody and I'm nervous about that and I don't want others to know." I get it. So here's the deal. Let me give you a phone number, it's on the screen, 334-231-2313. Do me a favor, everybody type that number. I want everybody to text this number that's in the room, alright? If you are that person, if you're the person who says, "I need somebody to pray with me. There's a decision I'm dealing with. I'm struggling on some things. I've got some questions that need to be answered." Here's what I want you to do, just send to that number, type the word "yes." Just the word "yes." Everybody else, type whatever you want. Anything. I don't care how crazy it sounds. We're gonna ignore it. The only thing we're interested in are the yeses. You said, "So why are you having us all text?" Because there may be somebody here tonight that's really struggling and I want your cellphone out with their cellphone so that they'll have the freedom to text as you're texting as well. I would ask that you not be lewd and crude but text anything you want. If you type the word "yes," we're gonna make contact with you. We're gonna make contact, we're gonna call you, we're gonna have a conversation with you. We want to answer your questions, we want to pray with you, we want to pray for you.

As I mentioned at the beginning tonight, we're living in different days. There's more people outside of the room than there are inside the room. We're not singing for a variety of reasons until we kind of work all that stuff out. And even when it comes to a time of decision, you know, maybe tonight standing up during a song and walking down an aisle in a crowd this size would have been very intimidating but typing "yes" is easy. If you

typed "yes," we're gonna make contact with you pretty soon. We would love to pray with you, pray for you and then celebrate however the Lord is moving and working in your lives.

Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, tonight, oh the unfathomable riches of your word and, God, I know that we've looked at it through a Second Coming lens, God, we know that you ultimately will pour out your wrath upon those who reject you and you will deliver those who believe but, God, right now I want to pray for those that are struggling. God, I know there are people in this room, there are people on the other side of the camera, they're hurting, they've got questions, they're bothered, their faith has been shaken and, God, I pray that your Holy Spirit would give them the courage just to reach out and type "yes." Lord, that they be willing to have a conversation, they'd be willing to be prayed with and to be prayed for. God, I pray that you would take the shackles of fear that have so riddled our world and society lately and you would allow them to fall apart. God, may we trust you not just to get us through a pandemic, may we trust you not to just get through a culture that is in upheaval, but God, help us to trust you not just with our very breath but even our eternity. Help us, O God, today to turn our fears, our struggles and our questions over to you and to you alone. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.