

Here is a rather blunt truth: You are a vulnerable person – perhaps more vulnerable than you realize. ... And so am I.

Brene Brown... a sociologist at the University of Huston... has a 20 minute video on YouTube... which... as of this month... has had over 10 million hits. In part... this is what she says:

We are "*those people*." The truth is ... we are the "others." Most of us are one paycheck, one divorce, one drug- addicted kid, one mental health diagnosis, one serious illness, one sexual assault, one drinking binge, one night of unprotected sex, or one affair away from being "*those people*"—the ones we don't trust, the ones we pity, the ones we don't let our children play with, the ones bad things happen to, the ones we don't want living next door.

The point of Brene Brown's talk is that we need to admit our vulnerability. But more than 2,000 years earlier... the Apostle **Peter** took the same approach to help us avoid... a more permanent disaster... of eternal consequences. ... You see... as part of the body of Christ... we are vulnerable to false prophets... who want to destroy our hope in Christ.

For the last three weeks our study of 2nd Peter has been dealing with the character ... and the certain future of the false prophets. Peter... like Jesus and the Apostle Paul... has warned us that false teachers will constantly hound the church... and we saw last week how they primarily prey upon the unstable... who are part of the church.

Now this morning... in our passage... Peter presents "How to Make Ourselves Invulnerable" to the false teachers. ... So how is it... that we can make sure we are not susceptible to become lion lunch?

Peter says... in today's passage... that it is the result from keeping in mind two things. ... And he admonishes us to remember them.

We will see that he calls for us to remember:

#1. Scriptural Prophecy

- a. from both the Old and the New Testaments
- b. specifically prophecy about Christ's return

That is the first thing we are to constantly be mindful of – Scriptural prophecy... and that which concerns itself with Christ's return.

Whenever I involve myself in a good prophetic study of the Scriptures... my faith is strengthened... I get excited that God allows me to be part of His Kingdom work of the ages. When I see how it has... and how it continues to come together... my faith is strengthened and joy floods my heart.

And then second... we are to remain mindful about...

#2. God's Uniqueness

We are about to see in this passage that God is unique in...

- 1) His abilities (He can easily break into the continuum of the laws of nature. He already has... and He will do it again. He is God!)
- 2) His timing (1,000 years is like a single day to Him. He operates from a different clock than we do.)
- 3) His mercy (He is waiting until the very last person turns to Him.)
- 4) His surprise (He will return when mankind is not expecting it, just like a thief breaks into a house by surprise.)

Those who teach false truths... and who mock our beliefs... and try to argue how illogical we are... organize their opinions from the framework that miracles are impossible. They cannot conceive a God Who is unique

from man. So Peter tells us to remain mindful that God **is** unique. The One Who created us... is far beyond our ways... and understanding.

Now please read with me from Scripture... how Peter exhorts us to protect ourselves from false teaching... by staying mindful of Scriptural prophecy... and God's uniqueness.

2 Peter 3:1-10

The second part of our passage this morning is concerned with our understanding that God is unique. I am not going to spend any more time on this... than what I have already said. Stay mindful that He is God. ... He can... and will... sovereignly intervene in the time... space... and material... of our known world... (He already has... and he will again...)

Now of course... there is a lot that can be studied about these intriguing concepts... such as 1,000 years being equal to one day... on God's clock... and His wonderful mercy of not wanting any to perish... (This alone deserves 25 sermons...) ... But I have sensed God's leading for me to primarily dwell on Peter's first point... this morning... that we are to be mindful of the prophecies concerning Christ's return. ... We have reminded ourselves of the second part – God's uniqueness. Now let's remind ourselves of the first part – prophecy.

There are so many prophecies concerning the second coming of Christ... which I don't think very many Christians are even aware of... and I think they will bolster your faith... and elicit a joy-filled sense... because you and I get to be part of His Kingdom plan of the ages...

Now this is going to be a quick study... of another subject deserving of 25 sermons... But today... I would like to open your eyes to the potential this has for making you less vulnerable to false teachers. Because we are going to move very quickly... I beg you... I implore you... I plead with you... to write each of these scripture references down... and then go back over them... please read them in their context... and let them flood your soul with this joy that I am talking about.

Verse 10 of our passage this morning mentions “The Day of the Lord.” “The Day of the Lord” is the period of end time prophecy... that begins with the rapture... when everyone who is alive in Christ at that time will be taken away with Christ... then it continues through the seven years of tribulation... which takes place here on earth... and then this period known as “the Day of the Lord” will end at the conclusion of the 7 year tribulation... when Christ returns to earth and reigns for 1,000 years.

But I want you to make this distinction with me... that the “Rapture” and “Christ’s Second Coming” are two different events... which are separated by the 7 year tribulation. ... Our passage in 2 Peter this morning asks us to be mindful in particular of the prophecies concerning Christ’s Second Coming. So these are the prophecies where I would like to focus.

Now we are going to take a very brief look at eight stages... or eight distinct events... that are predicted to happen... just before Christ returns. We pick these up at the end of the 7 year tribulation period.

STAGE ONE: The Assembling of the Allies of the Antichrist.

In Revelation 16... we learn that the Euphrates River is going to dry up... and this will make it easier for the forces of the Antichrist to assemble for

the Armageddon Campaign. This will happen with the outpouring of the sixth Bowl Judgment. The seven kings that Revelations has spoken of... being under the authority of the Antichrist... will all come together with their armies... for this campaign known as Armageddon.

Revelation 16:12-16 (ESV)

The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. (“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”) And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

Revelation 9 also speaks of an army from the east... and it is made up of 200 million **demons**... it is **not** soldiers from China. You see many end time Bible teachers have taught that the TRUMPET judgment of Revelation 9... and this BOWL judgment of Revelation 16... are the same event,, or at least the same armies. They are **NOT!** Both come from the east... but one... very clearly is made up of demons... again... not Chinese soldiers... and is a completely different judgment... which happens before the middle of the tribulation. This Bowl Judgment of revelation 16 happens at the end of the Tribulation.

Those that engage in the Armageddon Campaign are not 200 million Chinese... as is commonly... but **wrongfully** taught. These are the soldiers of the seven kings who are allies of Antichrist.

Another thing to take notice of... is that I am purposely using the phrase, "Armageddon Campaign"... and not "The Battle of Armageddon"... because it really is not a single battle that will occur in a place called Armageddon. The fighting actually happens someplace else... I will show you in just a moment. But Armageddon is merely where all of Antichrist's forces will **assemble**. It is a literal place... at the Western end of the Valley of Jezreel... at Megiddo Pass into Israel's largest valley.

The Prophet Joel also depicts this gathering. He gives us the perspective from God's vantage point. But notice that God's viewpoint is **mockery**... "Go ahead and turn your fighting implements into weapons of war against Me..."

Joel 3:9-11 (ESV)

Proclaim this among the nations: Consecrate for war; stir up the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, "I am a warrior." Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather yourselves there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD.

This taunting is again portrayed by the Psalmist...

Psalm 2:1-6 (ESV)

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will

... speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."

This gathering of the armies of the nations is the first stage of events... just before Christ returns.

STAGE TWO: The Destruction of Babylon

Babylon will become the world political capital... It will play a major role in the Tribulation events... as the residence of the Antichrist. This will more than likely be in the same place where Ancient Babylon existed... in the land that the Bible calls Shinar... (which is modern-day Iraq.)

Zechariah 5:5-11 (ESV)

Then the angel who talked with me came forward and said to me, "Lift your eyes and see what this is that is going out." And I said, "What is it?" He said, "This is the basket that is going out." And he said, "This is their iniquity in all the land." And behold, the leaden cover was lifted, and there was a woman sitting in the basket! And he said, "This is Wickedness." And he thrust her back into the basket, and thrust down the leaden weight on its opening. Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, two women coming forward! The wind was in their wings. They had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven. Then I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they taking the basket?" He said to me, "To the land of Shinar, to build a house for it. And when this is prepared, they will set the basket down there on its base."

Babylon will be rebuilt... in modern-day Iraq... Antichrist will base his activities from there during the period of the Tribulation. ... But just before Jesus' return... Babylon will be utterly destroyed. ... Now the first stage involves a gathering of pro-Antichrist forces. We are about to read another prophecy that depicts another gathering. This gathering is referred to as

“God’s consecrated ones.” This next prophecy that I will show you... involve forces who are ANTI-Antichrist. God will use these Gentile believers (His consecrated ones) to destroy Babylon.

Isaiah 13:1-5 (ESV)

The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw. On a bare hill raise a signal; cry aloud to them; wave the hand for them to enter the gates of the nobles. I myself have commanded my consecrated ones, and have summoned my mighty men to execute my anger, my proudly exulting ones. The sound of a tumult is on the mountains as of a great multitude! The sound of an uproar of kingdoms, of nations gathering together! The LORD of hosts is mustering a host for battle. They come from a distant land, from the end of the heavens, the LORD and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.

Now there are several other Old Testament prophecies that concern this event... but I only have time to show you a small sample...Continuing on in this 13th chapter of Isaiah...

Isaiah 13:19-22 (ESV)

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them. It will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there; no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there. But wild animals will lie down there, and their houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will dwell, and there wild goats will dance. Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; its time is close at hand and its days will not be prolonged.

Jeremiah wrote extensively about it... as a very clear sign of Christ’s very soon return. Both chapters 50 and 51 of Jeremiah are completely devoted

to this fall of Babylon. This is because it is such a very powerful sign that Christ's return is almost here.

Jeremiah 50:43 (ESV)

"The king of Babylon heard the report of them, and his hands fell helpless; anguish seized him, pain as of a woman in labor.

Jeremiah 51:31-32 (ESV)

One runner runs to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to tell the king of Babylon that his city is taken on every side; the fords have been seized, the marshes are burned with fire, and the soldiers are in panic.

Messengers have to go and tell the King of Babylon that the city has been destroyed. This only makes sense if he was **not there** when it happened. Otherwise he wouldn't need messengers to bring him this news. He would know it. ... So where is he?

The Campaign of Armageddon is underway. The armies are assembling in Armageddon... and more than likely... this is where Antichrist is. He is there... and so are his forces. Babylon is unprotected. ... God's consecrated ones destroy Babylon while Antichrist is away. ... Now rather than turning and going back to Babylon... which is already destroyed... Antichrist and his armies move South to Jerusalem. Here is another important sign... which I think many Jews living through these events... will read about... in their Hebrew Scriptures... and take appropriate action.

STAGE THREE: The Fall of Jerusalem

Zechariah 12:1-3 (ESV)

The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel: Thus

declares the LORD, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him: “Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples. The siege of Jerusalem will also be against Judah. On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples. All who lift it will surely hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth will gather against it.

Zechariah 14:1-2 (ESV)

Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Jerusalem does fall... but not very easily. In fact God empowers the Jewish forces to hold out for a while.

Zechariah 12:4-9 (ESV)

On that day, declares the LORD, I will strike every horse with panic, and its rider with madness. But for the sake of the house of Judah I will keep my eyes open, when I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, ‘The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the LORD of hosts, their God.’ “On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a blazing pot in the midst of wood, like a flaming torch among sheaves. And they shall devour to the right and to the left all the surrounding peoples, while Jerusalem shall again be inhabited in its place, in Jerusalem. “And the LORD will give salvation to the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not surpass that of Judah. On that day the LORD will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, going before them. And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Micah 4:11-13 (ESV)

Now many nations are assembled against you, saying, "Let her be defiled, and let our eyes gaze upon Zion." But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD; they do not understand his plan, that he has gathered them as sheaves to the threshing floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion, for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hoofs bronze; you shall beat in pieces many peoples; and shall devote their gain to the LORD, their wealth to the Lord of the whole earth.

When Jerusalem finally does fall... the forces of the Antichrist will move on to try and defeat the Jews who God has been protecting in a very special place since the Tribulation.

STAGE FOUR: The Armies of Antichrist at Borzah

During the Tribulation... God will prepare a city of Refuge for a faithful remnant of Jews. Matthew wrote of this:

Matthew 24:16 (ESV)

then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Revelation 12 also tells us about it... using the imagery of a woman who Satan tried to devour... The image of this woman is the people of Israel.

Revelation 12:6 (ESV)

and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

Revelation 12:14 (ESV)

But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

God feeds and protects a faithful remnant Jews... in the wilderness during the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation. Isaiah also wrote of this in Isaiah 33...

Isaiah 33:13-16 (ESV)

Hear, you who are far off, what I have done; and you who are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: "Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?" He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions, who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking on evil, he will dwell on the heights; his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks; his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.

I wish that we had time for me to show you also Isaiah 41:17-20... and Isaiah 65:8-16. But we know from each of these that this place God will take them to... is 1) in the mountains 2) in the wilderness 3) a place God will prepare in advance with food and water ... and 4) it will be very defensible. They will be left alone there... until Antichrist and his forces have defeated Jerusalem.

Now... this next... amazing prophecy that I will show you... tells us the **exact location** of this Tribulation refuge.

Micah 2:12

I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob; I will gather the remnant of Israel; I will set them together like sheep of Borzah, like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men.

It is very unfortunate that the ESV translation that I normally use when I preach... has removed the name Borzah. It reads... "I will set them

together like the sheep of a fold...” But other translations say “Borzah”... as the original Hebrew reads. Now to be fair to the ESV translators... I can understand why they substituted the words “of a fold” instead of Borzah. Borzah means “sheepfold.” But... I still think it is unfortunate that they did not use “Borzah” because Borzah is also a place that is in the mountains... in the wilderness... and is very defensible. This place called Borzah... I will show you in a moment... definitely plays a part in this period of End Times Prophecy. ... So I am convinced that the refuge will be in Borzah... located in the region of Mt. Seir... in the Bible land of Edom.

When the prophet Daniel discusses the activities of the Antichrist in Daniel chapter 11... in the midst of that discussion... Daniel prophesied that three nations would prevail... and would resist the Antichrist’s world political dominance. Three nations will not be conquered by the Antichrist... they will escape his domination. They are Edom... Moab... and Ammon.

Daniel 11:41 (ESV)

He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites.

Borzah... which I believe is God’s city of refuge for the faithful remnant... is in Edom. God will provide this city of refuge outside the Antichrist’s domain. ... But after Jerusalem falls... Antichrist and his forces now concentrate their efforts to overcome it.

When the armies of Antichrist come against the faithful remnant at Borzah... Israel will confess its national sin – that they had rejected Messiah’s first coming. The leaders of Israel will finally recognize the

reason that the Tribulation had fallen on them. Many Jews will have already realized this through the preaching of the 144,000 witnesses... and the two witnesses who will be given special powers... and preach to the Jews during the Tribulation. A lot of Jews will become believers in Christ... during the period of the Tribulation. But finally... for the first time... the Jewish national leaders will confess their national sin.

When Jesus approached Jerusalem for the last time... when He went there to present Himself to be crucified... He lamented over Israel's rejection of Him... and then Jesus made a promise... that they would not see Him again... (in other words... He is surrendering Himself to die at their hands... and He will not **return**)... until they can say of Him "Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord."

Matthew 23:37-39 (ESV)

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Israel had rejected Jesus as Messiah... and Jesus made a very significant promise... that he will not return until Israel... its national leadership... all agree that He truly is the Messiah. (He is the "Blessed One Who comes in the Name of the Lord.")

Folks... this is what Christ is waiting for... this is what holds up Christ's return... this is the final thing that must happen before Jesus will return to

earth. Israel's national leaders must recognize Jesus as Messiah. ...
And... they will do this... when Antichrist has surrounded them at Bozrah.

STAGE FIVE: The Second Coming of Christ

Wow! You really have to see this next passage! This one puts it all together! Israel's national leaders confess their national sin... and ask Jesus to help them... according to Isaiah 64. And He does just that! Jesus' return is in response to their confession... and their plea for His help against the forces of the Antichrist. (And please take notice as we read this next passage of the very place where Christ first appears.)

Isaiah 34:1-7 (ESV)

Draw near, O nations, to hear, and give attention, O peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that fills it; the world, and all that comes from it. For the LORD is enraged against all the nations, and furious against all their host; he has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter. Their slain shall be cast out, and the stench of their corpses shall rise; the mountains shall flow with their blood. All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree. For my sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; behold, it descends for judgment upon Edom, upon the people I have devoted to destruction. The LORD has a sword; it is sated with blood; it is gorged with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, a great slaughter in the land of Edom. Wild oxen shall fall with them, and young steers with the mighty bulls. Their land shall drink its fill of blood, and their soil shall be gorged with fat.

Now look at another amazing passage in Isaiah 63...

Isaiah 63:1 (ESV)

Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from

Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save."

The One Who speaks in righteousness and is mighty to save... can only be the Messiah. But Isaiah asks another question in the next verse.

Isaiah 63:2 (ESV)

Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress?

Jesus then answers...

Isaiah 63:3-6 (ESV)

"I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come. I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me. I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."

Isaiah is not the only prophet who wrote about this...

Habakkuk 3:3 (ESV)

*God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.
Selah*

Teman and Mount Paran... are both in the exact area of Borzah. ...Now... Acts chapter one tells us the MANNER in which Christ will return. It will be

just as He was taken up... in the clouds. But these Old Testament prophecies reveal WHERE Christ will first return.

The Bible is full of great detail... concerning the return of Christ. It has far more to say about Christ's moving from Borzah to Jerusalem... He will touch down on the Mount of Olives... there will be Geographical changes... He will easily defeat the Antichrist by simply speaking a word... He will bind Satan... Jesus will have a 1000 year reign... and there are so many other details. ... Every bit of this is certain to happen. Let the false teachers laugh and mock at it... I would not want to be in their shoes!

The very next big event that we are waiting for right now... is the rapture. Before all of these things that I have been discussing occur... Jesus will return... only as far as the clouds in the sky... Believers will be snatched up to meet Him there in a twinkling of an eye... and we will be forever with Him. Unbelievers... will remain... and will go through the horrible tribulation period... a time of such trouble... that the world has never seen before.

Will you be part of the rapture... if it happens today...? It can happen at any moment. Everything that Scripture says needs to happen before the rapture ensues... has occurred. This event is imminent!

We are NOT playing a GAME ! All things are happening perfectly according to a sovereign plan. Jesus' first coming happened absolutely perfect to all the prophecy about it... therefore we can know His second coming will be perfect with the prophecy.