***The Absolute Certainty of Hope
RO160-01***

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We are studying Romans 12:9-12. Our subject is "Christian Conduct," and this is segment number seven.

There was a title of an old popular song – a title that expressed an idea in the words: "doing what comes naturally." But to the Christian, God says, "Don't do that. Don't do what comes naturally." What comes naturally is from an evil sin nature within us, and those things are unbecoming of a Christian.

In Romans 12, God is telling His children to do what comes *supernaturally* – that which is the product of Bible doctrine, and the indwelling Holy Spirit: using that truth in our understanding, and guiding in our experience – a life, which is live in the image of Jesus Christ. For a Christian to get his thinking transformed from human viewpoint to divine viewpoint, he must indeed be taught the Word of God. This enables him to keep his life from being wasted down some rat hole. It enables him to live the best life possible, as per God's plan for him – and God does have a plan for each of you. It gives us a sober and true picture of ourselves when we have divine viewpoint in our thinking. It gives us perspective on our general role in the body of Christ with service through the spiritual gifts we have been given.

So, the apostle Paul lays out before us now, very specifically, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that which constitutes the principles of Christian conduct. We have learned, therefore, that we are to have a mental attitude love for all mankind without any hypocrisy toward anybody. We are, secondly, to have a deep revulsion toward evil in the form of sins and human good. We are, furthermore, told that we are to be glued to that which is divine good. We are also to be diligent in our devotion to other Christians with an emotional love toward other believers. We are, furthermore, told to lead out in showing honor for other believers. We should be the point-people in indicating appreciation for the people of God. We are, furthermore, not to lag behind anybody in zeal for serving God. We should also be out there in front, leading the pack, when it comes to doing God's work. We are also to be fervent in our human spirits for the things of God as the result of the filling of the Holy Spirit. We are, in short, Paul says, to live our lives as slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ, doing His will as our Master, rather than doing our own thing.

Our Heavenly Father has indeed been very gracious to give us these clear and practical guidelines for living our lives for maximum blessing in time and in eternity. It helps us to get things in perspective. We learn a lot of principles of the Word of God, but it is amazing how often we can't take those principles, and then apply them to some situation that we have between ourselves and some other person.

**Rejoicing in Hope**

So, what the apostle Paul is doing here is saying, "Now let me bring this down to a very specific kind of guidelines – the kind of people you should be as Christians. So, we have come now to Romans 12:12, where Paul says, "Rejoicing in hope." The word "rejoicing" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the Greek word "chairo." "Chairo" means "to possess a personal happiness." It is grammatically in the present tense, which means that this is to be the continual attitude of the believer. It is active, which means you can decide to be happy. Yes, you can. You put the pieces together, and you get the life aligned, and you operate on those principles of the Word of God, and you have full control over directing your life in the midst of all kinds of turmoil, such that there will be an inner happiness in your soul. This is a spiritual principle which is laid out here for our guidance.

**Hope**

There is an object (a basis) for this happiness that is to characterize the believer, and that is rejoicing in hope. This is the Greek word "elpis." The word "hope" in the Greek language is different that the word "hope" in the English language. When we use the word hope in English language, we're implying a possibility that we may not realize what we would like to have: "I hope that this will happen." We're not sure. Maybe it will; and, maybe it won't. But that is totally different in this Greek word "elpis." When it says, "hope," it is a certainty: "I'm hoping because I know it's going to happen." It's a totally different concept, and you must shift your thinking from the English meaning of the word.

In the New Testament, the word "hope" indicates a confident expectation about something in the future. If you'll remember that every time you read the word "hope" in the New Testament, it'll give you a totally different picture on what God is talking about. It is not "maybe it'll happen;" but, "it's going to happen." It does not carry the idea of some possible disappointment. It is a sure result which is anticipated.

**Hope in the Bible Means Absolute Certainty**

We may illustrate this in Romans 8:24-25, where this word "elpis" is used: "For we are saved by hope." And there's a splendid example of what it means. The Bible never implies that you don't know whether you're going to heaven or not. The Bible, as a matter of fact, considers that a very serious breakdown. If you are not sure that you're going to heaven, it implies that you think you're going there because of something you do, rather than something that Christ has already done for you. "We have been saved by hope." What kind of a hope? An absolute certainty: "But hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for?" The reason we call it "hope" is because we don't actually have that salvation. Oh, we know we're going to get it. Therefore, we can say it is our hope. It is a sure and a certain hope: "For if we hope for that which we don't see, then do we, with patience, wait for it." We don't see it. We hope for it. Because we know it is a sure thing, we wait with patience for it.

**The Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

The believer's hope fundamentally is the result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit which has forever placed the believer into Christ. When you received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, a supernatural thing took place within you, and that is that God the Holy Spirit, at that point in time, baptized you; that is, He placed you into Jesus Christ. He identified you with the living Son of God. And this is the grounds for our hope for eternal life in heaven.

**Eternal Life**

The only reason you can say, "I have a certain hope for eternal life," is because you are in Christ. You cannot say, "I have hope for heaven because I'm such a nice person," or "because I try so hard to be a nice person," or "because I serve the Lord so faithfully." That is because those things go up, and those things go down. We are never certain of anything from God if it depends on what we do. It is because we are in Christ that we have the certainty of hope of eternal life.

This irrevocable destiny causes, therefore, great rejoicing in the believer. A normal person says, "That makes me very happy. I know what kind of a sinner I can really be, and it makes me very happy to know that, should I stumble; should I fall back into my old ways for one reason or another; or, should I slip into some of the terrible things that once characterized my life, I'm still going to go to heaven. Now that makes me very happy to know that, because it takes the pressure off of me, and I realize it's all been handled by God for me."

**The Gift of Salvation**

So, this gift of salvation makes our Heavenly Father the God of our hope. And that results in joy for us. Romans 15:13 puts it this way: "Now the God of hope fill you all with joy and peace in believing; that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." Our God is a God of hope. He does not offer us eternal life on a conditional basis. That's no hope. There's no certainty about that. He gives us eternal life on an unconditional basis.

Without this personal relationship to Jesus Christ, indeed, there is no hope in life. Nothing has any significant meaning. When we were in our unsaved days, the one thing that characterized us, the Bible says, is that we were without hope. Ephesians 2:12 puts it this way: "That at that time (that is, the time when you were outside of Christ), as unbelievers, you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants (had none of the Jewish promises and blessings), just lost gentiles having no hope, and without God in the world." That is the tragic condition of the average gentile today. He is without hope. He has nothing before him but the certain destiny of the lake of fire.

**Jesus Christ**

1 Timothy 1:1 says, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, Who is our hope." So, without the personal relationship with Jesus Christ that we have as a result of our having been baptized by the Holy Spirit, so that we have been identified with Christ, we have no hope. The unsaved person has no hope for a happy eternity, no matter how hard he tries.

**Everyone has Eternal Existence**

It comes as a shock to some people to realize that everyone has eternal existence. The question is: are you going to spend that eternal existence in eternal death in the lake of fire, or are you going to spend that eternal existence in eternal life with God in heaven? The hope for that is in Christ alone.

**The Gospel**

People who are, therefore, ignorant of the gospel of the grace of God have no way out of that hopelessness. Therefore, you should begin to make it a practice to carry, in the glove compartment of your car, a number of these evangelism brochures; to slip a couple of them into your purse; or, to carry them with you in some way. And when the people you do business with, the clerk will hand you the change at the checkout counter at K-Mart or someplace, you should end your transaction with: "Could I leave this with you? I think you might find this interesting to read." The very picture on the cover will captivate a person's attention right off the bat.

Can you imagine how many contacts you have every day of your life with human beings to whom you can now, with one simple act, hand a whole package of information about how to go to heaven? And it gives the full story. It gives the basis for the claims that are made. It gives the authority of Scripture. For a thoughtful person, it gives the whole works. If the person is non-elect, he may read it, and he will not believe it. He'll pitch it aside. Maybe somebody else will pick it up. But for the person who is elect, God the Holy Spirit can use this instrument to open the door to eternal life for that person. Without this gospel information, the people that we deal with are absolutely without hope. They muddle through life. They never have a moment of real joy, or a moment of real peace.

The Christian's hope is based upon the fact that what God has said in the Scriptures is certain to come to pass. God has spoken to us with full truthfulness. So, we have, for that reason, a variety of hopes.

**The Hope of a Personal Resurrection**

Because God has spoken to us, and because He always tells the truth, we have the hope of a personal resurrection. Because Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, we too shall follow him. 1 Peter 1:3 says this: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again, unto a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We have a hope of life. Because Christ is alive, we too shall live.

**The Hope of the Absolute Righteousness of God**

We have the hope of someday receiving the very absolute righteousness of God. Can you imagine that you can indeed have the hope (not as a vain hope, but as a sure expectation) that someday you will be absolutely perfect. You will be just like Jesus Christ. Galatians 5:5: "For we, through the Spirit (through the Holy Spirit) wait for the hope of righteousness by faith, we wait for the time of our absolute righteousness.

**The Hope of Going to Heaven**

Because God is truthful, we have the hope that Jesus Christ is going to come to take us to heaven. Titus 2:13 puts it this way: "Looking for that blessed hope; the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." We look for what the Bible calls our blessed hope – being caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

**The Hope of Being Transformed into the Image of Christ**

Because the Word of God makes us this promise concerning our future quality in our personal being, we are told that we will be transformed into the very image of Christ. So, we have that hope. 1 John 3:2: "Beloved, now are we the children of God. And it does not yet appear what we shall be. For we know that when He (Jesus Christ) shall appear, we shall be like Him. For we shall see Him as He is. And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure." Yes, someday we are going to be a totally pure and perfect individual. When we know that (that's our hope – it's a sure thing), the average Christian says, "That's the way I'd like to live now. That's the kind of a person I'd like to be." And we pursue that kind of a lifestyle.

**The Hope that Removes any Fear of Death**

It is because of the promise of the Word of God that we have the hope that removes from us any fear of death. 1 Thessalonians 4:13 says, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them who are asleep (Christians who have died); that you sorrow not, not even as others who have no hope." It is a tough funeral to conduct for an unbeliever. It is a tough funeral to conduct, in the presence of unbelievers, who, because they have no hope, and they have lost someone who is very important to them, will completely go berserk as they stand at that casket, trying in desperation to claw and hold on to a corpse in which there is no life. That's when you see the grimness of the lack of hope in the average person when it comes to life and death. Because of the promise of God, we have the hope of an absolute freedom from the fear of death, because we know that God has said, "I don't like death. It was never in My original creation. It was brought in by sin." And our Heavenly Father has said, "I'm going to reverse the whole miserable thing, because I'm going to bring back to life every human being I've ever made in my image. They'll all get their eternal existence. And death is going to be wiped out. Some of them will have that eternal existence with Me; and, some of them will have that eternal existence with Satan as per their choice. But our hope is certain in either direction.

**The Hope of Peace**

Now certainly one of the things for which we Christians have a great hope on the basis of the promise of God is for peace: both personal – we not only have the peace *of* God as a result of our justification; but the Bible says that you may also have peace *with* God in your daily relationship with Him, as you maintain temporal fellowship. But that peace that concerns us as Christians has a broader outreach than that. Certainly, the eyes of all the world today are interested in that broader peace – that which was promised to the people of the world when the Savior Jesus Christ was born. Here He is. The Prince of Peace has come into the world. And God is ready to bring peace to this earth. God is ready to bring stability in human relationship to men of goodwill.

**The Millennium**

So, we as Christians do rejoice in the fact that we know that peace is coming to this earth. It's going to be a specific peace of 1,000 years with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself ruling upon this earth. And we will be helping Him. And we rejoice in the fact that He is going to rule in this way over all the nations of the world.

Now, . . . a lot of people are denying that this is going to happen, but the Bible is quite clear about it. For example, in the prophet Zachariah 14:9, we read, "And the Lord (referring to Jesus Christ) shall be King over all the earth in that day (that millennial day). There will be one Lord, and His name one." So, the Bible is very clear in the Old Testament, repeatedly, that God Himself, in the person of the Son of God, the Messiah Savior, is going to rule over this earth.

In Revelation 20:4, that same condition of peaceful rule is reiterated when John says, "And I saw thrones, and they that set upon them, and judgment was given unto them. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast (the antichrist), neither his image (his idol); neither had received his mark on their foreheads or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ 1,000 years."

Here we have a clear picture of Jesus Christ, as the Old Testament predicted, reigning over this world for 1,000 years in a wonderful golden age. The earthly reign of Jesus Christ is when peace is going to come. No matter how you read the Bible, there's never any hope for any peace on this earth without the Prince of Peace Himself being here.

Isaiah 2:4 puts it this way: "And He shall judge among the nations (the Messiah Savior), and shall rebuke many peoples, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore." (In jest:) I'm happy to announce to you that the recent treaty, which was signed in Moscow, has now brought this verse into reality. We now have peace on this earth. We are all going to take our weapons now, and we are going to destroy them. On television, I myself saw the Russians putting the torch to some of their ballistic missiles. And they're making plowshares out of them. They're turning them into pruning hooks for agricultural use. I saw it happen right before my eyes. And there will not be any more wars in the world. Russia is now a peaceful nation. Russia is closing its war college because nobody needs to learn how to make war anymore. So, what have we been seeing? How are we going to interpret, as Christians, all of the fantastic hoopla that has gone on in recent days concerning peace on this earth?

There is going to come a time of peace. There is no doubt about it. The prophet Micah 4:3 reinforces what Isaiah said: "And He shall judge among many people (the Messiah Savior), and rebuke strong nations afar off. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not let them sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore." (In jest:) Mr. Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev have made all this possible for us.

Furthermore, the Bible tells us that all these nations now who have found peace will recognize that God is there, and that God is holy, and that they need to know about Him, and that there is only one source of knowing about God, and that is through the Jewish people. Zechariah 8:23 tells us that this is what's going to happen: "Thus says the Lord of Hosts, 'In those days, it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nation, even shall take hold of the skirt of Him that is a Jew, saying, 'We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." (In jest:) Raisa Gorbachev and her husband are visiting with the Jews in order to find out about God, because they know that God is with them. They're trying to get the Jews to explain to them about spiritual things. You look like you don't believe that. Haven't you been listening to the news? That's what the Bible says. When the basis of peace finally comes, along with it will come the awareness that there is some information about God, and it comes through the Jewish people.

Isaiah 11:9: "They shall not hurt, nor destroy, in all My holy mountain (speaking about this time in history – the time of peace), for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Everybody is going to know about the true God now. So, today, yes, I'm being sarcastic. The nations of the world are naively holding conferences to sign treaties to establish peace on the earth. And the president of the United States is announcing that a new era has begun in relationship with the greatest tyrant, the most brutal beast, the killer of all killers of all history: the Russian government and the communist system. These current meetings between Reagan and Gorbachev have created euphoria for a new era of peace among the people of the world. Who would have thought that we would ever have seen Ronald Reagan, the great opponent of communism, put his arm around the latest brute beast at the top of the communist system, Mikhail Gorbachev, in a show of friendship and peace.

However, I noticed that old Mike didn't put his hand around Reagan's shoulder. We are now in the process of establishing peace by destroying the weapons that we have on hand. Russia is no longer even the evil empire that President Reagan once very accurately described it as. He was asked, "Do you think it's still an evil empire?" He said, "Well, no, I think it's a bumbling bureaucracy. We had the same thing here. You know, we're kind of evil ourselves." I don't know about Reagan – he may be evil, but I'm nice. This evil empire is no longer evil because they have agreed to bust up some weapons.

The impression we are being give is that Russian communism has mellowed, and it really wants peace for the world. The Russian leaders, we are told, want real freedom for their enslaved people. I think it is very exciting what we have seen happen. I think that another giant peace has fallen into place in the mosaic forming the picture of world conditions preceding the rapture and the tribulation era. A giant peace has fallen into place in preparation for the conditions of the rapture and the Lord's return. This condition is described in 1 Thessalonians 5:3 in this way: "For when they shall say, 'Peace and safety,' then sudden destruction comes upon them as travail upon a woman with a child. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

**Russia**

How many Christians about whom can we say that they are not in darkness in these matters? How many Christians can we really say are not caught up in this euphoric false delusion of peace that this summit has created, but have understood that another peace has been put into place for the picture that must exist for the Lord's return? Is Russia really going now to pursue a road of peace? Does Russia really want to be the kind of a nation that can be respected as a civilized country?

Well, I'm here to tell you that again, God, in His prophetic word, has already told us what Russia is going to do. Unfortunately, nobody on President Reagan's team called his attention to Ezekiel 38 and 39. Please turn to them. Ezekiel 38 and 39 tell us exactly what Russia is about ready to do. It's no secret. Russia's true colors have already been revealed by this prophet. In Ezekiel 38:1-3, Ezekiel prophesies against a great political leader called Gog who heads up a nation called Magog. The revelation from God to the property Ezekiel took place in the sixth century, B.C. God says that He is angry at this people (Magog), and He is infuriated at its leader, Gog. What He is referring to here is to a people who have descended from the line of Japheth through one of Jacob's sons, Magog, who settled north of Palestine in the area that we see today, and know as modern Russia. Genesis 10:2 tells you about this son, and what Ezekiel is speaking about. When he speaks about Gog, he is speaking about the head of the Politburo today. When he speaks about Magog, he is speaking about the Russian people.

Verse 1: "And the Word of the Lord came up to me saying," This means that this is not something that Ezekiel invented. It is the true Word of God: "Son of man, set your face against Gog of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against them." These are areas of Russia: "And thus says the Lord God: 'Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.'"

In verses 4-7, we are told that that God is going to bring the Russians down to attack the nation of Israel, and that the Russians will be accompanied by allies, which will make this one of the most powerful military forces this world has ever seen. We thought we had put together something for the D-Day landing on the beaches of Normandy in World War II. Never in the history of the world had so many military forces been brought together on land and sea and air, for a united effort, for an amphibious landing. There has been no such amphibious landing, before or since, as on the four main beaches of Normandy. It was a monumental undertaking, and unbelievable in its awesome impact when it was finally turned loose. But that's nothing compared to what's going to be put together here by Russia and the allies that she comes with.

Verse 4: "And I will turn you back, and put hooks into your jaw." You put a ring into the nose of a bull, and you put a chain on it, and he's sensitive on his nose. And you can pull him and make him go where you want him to go. God says, "I'm sticking this book in your nose, Russia, and I'm going to jerk on you, and I'm going to pull you right down to attack Israel:" "And I will bring you forth, and all your army (horses, and horsemen, and all of them), clothed with all sorts of armor, even a great company with bucklers and shields of all sorts, handling swords." He is speaking of armaments in terms of the day in which Ezekiel lived.

Then he names some of the allies which are going to move with Russia upon Israel: Persia (Iran today); Cush (Libya today); Put (Ethiopia today) – all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer (East Germany), and all its hoards; and the house of Togarmah (Turkey) of the north quarters, and all its hoards, and many peoples with you." These will be the basic allies that will surround Israel, which will join Russia's attack from the north upon the land of Palestine. There will be another lesser group of Arabs that also will surround Israel, like Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and the Arabian countries, which will also join in this attack, no doubt.

So, these allies mount a major invasion of the Middle East aimed at Israel. And Russia has put together a force that can do this. Verse 7 says, "Be prepared, and prepare for yourself, you and all your company that are assembled unto you, and be a guard unto them." So, God says, "I'm going to bring this powerful force down."

**Disarmament**

So, what's happened to our disarmament? How did Russia get this strong – after we just signed the treaty, and we're getting ready to sign another treaty? A giant piece has fallen into place. A delusionary peace has been established, and they're going to follow up upon it.

You know, there was a time when the United States had enormous military superiority over Russia. So, great was it that in 1946, you may not remember, shortly after the end of World War II, Russia decided to start moving out, to start collecting nations for its conquest for world communism – its basic number one doctrine that it must obey. In 1946, it invaded Iran. At that time, the United States was the only nation that had the atom bomb. President Truman called in the Russian ambassador, and without any niceness, and without mincing any words, said, "I want you out of Iran in 48 hours. And if you don't get out, we're going to drop the atom bomb on you. The ambassador turned white. He couldn't believe that anybody would talk to him like that – a representative of the only other major nation in the world at that time. He turned around and walked out, and sent the message back to Russia. And in 24 hours, they were out of Iran. That was the United States.

In 1962, President Kennedy had botched up the invasion of Cuba that had been prepared under President Eisenhower. Kennedy, who deliberately removed the air cover that those troops on the beach needed, so that the poor men who made that landing were easily slaughtered by Castro's communist troops. In 1962, the Russians decided they could push Kennedy around a little more. And they put those missiles right there at our back door. Kennedy put the pressure back on them. And because Russia still could not stand to the power of the United States, they backed off, and took the missiles out. They said, "Get them out, or else." And Kennedy began mobilizing. Some of you remember. Pretty soon, troops were being called up: "You guys start reporting to your bases." And everybody knew that Kennedy meant to invade. It's a pity the Russians backed down, but they did. We could have solved the problem then. And the Russians really stewed about this.

Then Kennedy and his Secretary of Defense, McNamara, naively decided that the whole problem with the Russians was that we were making them afraid, because we were so strong, and that's why they were so paranoid and aggressive. So, they said to the Russians, "We know you're afraid of us, because we're so much stronger than you are. But we'll tell you what we're going to do." And this is what they actually said to them: "We will hold up building any more armaments. We will mark time, and we'll let you go full-speed ahead, and catch up to us. So, when you are caught up to us, we will be equal in strength, but you must not create a civil defense system of any kind. Then our cities will be exposed to your destruction, and yours will be exposed to our destruction." And they called that by the acronym MAD: Mutually Assured Destruction. It had to take a crazy like McNamara to come up with an idea like that.

For years after that naive approach to the Russians, the Russians said, "Oh, thank you very much. Yeah, we'll do that." And they took it, and they began building. And when they caught up to us, they went right by us. They just kept moseying along like that miserable turtle did in the fable of the turtle and the rabbit. They kept right on going past us. And pretty soon, they were so superior, that there was no way the United States could equal them.

As if that wasn't bad enough, President Nixon even authorized (as an example of what was done in technology given to the Russians, so they could catch up to us) the sale to the Russians of the technology of precise ball bearing-producing machines that only the United States had, and they had to have these precise ball bearings in order to have guidance systems that would precisely reach their targets. The Russians could not produce that no matter how they tried. Their bumbling system had odd-ball ball bearings that would not guide the system accurately. It didn't hit the target. Nixon said, "Listen, fellas, we'll give you the machines. We'll give you the technology. You can make the ball bearings. Then you'll know that you can hit us with accuracy. And then you don't have to be afraid of us anymore, because we won't want to hit you because we know that you'll hit us. MAD.

The great international bankers decided that they also needed to help Russia with its technology. The system doesn't give anybody incentive. So, with the guidance of Rockefeller, and Chase Manhattan Bank, and other bankers, they built the Kama River truck plant. It is the most modern truck-building plant in the world – completely computerized. The United States does not have a truck plant like this, probably to this day. And 90% of this was covered by loans from U.S. banks. And they said that: "If you Russians do not pay back the loans, we will agree to have the United States Treasury pay the banks."

I kid you not. You say, "That's crazy." We're giving our enemies the capacity to make military vehicles? You can't fight a war without mobility today." Yeah, that's what we did. But the Russians promised they would not make military vehicles at the Karma River plant. Guess where the trucks came from, into Afghanistan? Right out of the Kama River plant. And the first thing the Russians started to make at the Kama River plant was a diesel engine that we discovered was only used in one kind of vehicle: Russian tanks.

So, here the Russians again proved that they know a fool when they see one. And the United States government, of course, is full of them. They gravitate, because the country doesn't know what to do with them, so they elect him to public office, and send them to Congress, just to get them out of the way, so they're not under our feet.

So, Kennedy and McNamara, and those who followed them, established the MAD approach to get world peace. Well, the Russians, when they did catch up, and they did establish their superiority, proceeded now to start gobbling up one nation after another, because now there was not going to be any more Truman to call them in and say, Get out, or else." There was not going to be any Kennedy to say, "Get those missiles out, or else," because now they could thumb their nose at the Americans, who had now made them strong enough to surpass American military might.

**Communism Today**

So, today, one billion people are enslaved under socialism – over 35 countries. Russia has made arms limitations with the United States, and broken every one of them. Russia continues to be an evil empire, no matter how President Reagan waffles on the subject now, and what he wants to say. Russia is guided by its goal of conquering the world for communism. You should realize that, since 1917, the Russians have murdered more than 37 million of their own people who would not subject themselves to the socialist system and to communist tyranny. You should know that, since 1949, communist China has murdered 67 million of its own people. The leaders of Russia today are brutal tyrants who love power. They hate God, and they're capable of any wickedness in order to gain their goals.

Some of you may have forgotten that World War II began with an agreement between Hitler and Stalin – that Stalin and Hitler would invade Poland: Hitler, from one side; and, Stalin from the east. And they would divide the country in half. And Hitler knew that his Eastern Front was now safe, so he could go after Britain and the West. That's where Russia stood. It was only after Hitler double-crossed Stalin and the Russians that the Russians came in on our side in World War II.

**Operation Keelhaul**

After the war was over, Stalin did not like the fact that a million-and-a-half former people who lived in Russia, of one kind and another, had been removed by the Germans, and taken prisoner, and so on. And these people did not want to go back to Russia. But at the Yalta conference, President Roosevelt was pressured by Stalin that those people must be returned to him. So, they began one of the most disgraceful pages in American history: Operation Keelhaul. Do you know what a keelhaul is? Have you ever read Mutiny on the Bounty? Do you remember when a sailor was being disciplined? They would put a rope around him; put the other end of the rope under the keel of the ship; and, then at the signal of the captain, they'd pull this guy off of one side of the ship, and the sailors would pull as fast as they could, and they pull him under the keel, which was a long way around. And if he didn't hold his breath all the way under, and if he took in water, he'd drown – until they pulled him back up on the other side. It was almost a certain death to be keelhauled.

We called it Operation Keelhaul because we were sending these million-and-a-half human beings back to their deaths at the hands of Stalin. The United States has blindly proceeded to pursue peaceful coexistence, detente, and now the IBM Treaty, and the summit, which has assured all of us that we have taken a giant step forward toward world peace. The poor American soldiers (the military personnel) who were responsible for executing the order of Operation Keelhaul did it with tears in their eyes, overwhelmed by the agonies and the faces of the people that they were forcing on those trains and on those vehicles, because those people knew what Stalin was going to do to them once they got back. He considered them traitors by the very fact that they were made prisoners of war instead of dying on the spot.

So, the latest device for Russia is to take pressure off of itself economically. It wants to ease up on the demands of armaments, because the country is an economic basket case. The people are becoming restless. They are getting sick of this tyranny. They're getting sick of standing three hours every day. The average Russian has to stand three hours every day just to get the necessities of life. He has to stand in line, because there's so little to go around, because the system does not produce it. The Crimea used to be the breadbasket of Europe. It used to export grain. Now the Russians cannot feed their own people, because they've destroyed the free enterprise encouragement of capitalism. Russia has a terrible geographic location on the planet. This also is part of what is moving her to this description we have an in Ezekiel 38 about her attack on the Middle East, and upon Israel as the hub.

If you look at a globe of the world, and put your finger on Russia, and then turn the globe, and let it run across at the same latitude, you will find that most of Russia is in the territory in our hemisphere of Canada and Alaska. That's where Russia lays. Hardly a day ever gets above 50 degrees. That's what you live in all the time. I lived for two weeks in Alaska one time, and that was bad enough. But to think to live there all year round, in Alaska even, you have to like that kind of condition. Well, this is Russia all the time, because it sits so far up toward the North Pole. So, it has abominable severe cold weather. In the wintertime, its ports all freeze up. Its warmest area is down in the Crimea by the Black Sea. Put your finger on that and roll the globe around, and do you know where you'll come out over here? In Minnesota and Wisconsin. Ever been up in Minnesota or Wisconsin in the wintertime; or, Michigan in the wintertime. That is cold territory. That's the warmest part of Russia. That's their Miami Beach.

So, the Russians have always historically wanted to get out of this horrible geographic climate that they're in, and to get down to warm water ports – to have some place where the ports were open all year round. And this is, again, what is going to drive them, no doubt, to make their move against the nation of Israel. They are fully assured that they can now handle anything in the world. Right now, they have to reestablish themselves with some economic strength. So, that's what they're conning the United States in now. They want to take the pressure off of us so that we don't have to bring these missiles, and do all this armament, so that we cannot provide consumer goods.

In verse 8-13, we have the Russians making their move against the mountains of Israel, and the Jews who have now been returned from many nations. And they are sitting in peace under the antichrist. This is Daniel 9:27. The antichrist has said to Israel, "I'll be your protector. They're sitting in the land. It is the middle of the tribulation. And the Jews are having a ball. Finally, the Arabs and everybody that's been trying to get at them have been squelched and put aside, because the antichrist is in charge of that part of the world. His only opposing power is Russia. But the antichrist is protecting the Jews.

Ezekiel 38:8: "After many days, you shall be visited. In the latter years, you shall come into the land that is brought back from the sword (that is, Israel), and gather out of many peoples against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste. But it is brought forth out of the nation, and they shall dwell safely, all of them." Israel is at peace: "You shall ascend and come like a storm. You shall be like a cloud to cover the land: you and all your hoards, and many peoples with you. Russia is going to come with their allies. They're going to sweep down on the nation of Israel like a storm going across the countryside.

Verse 10: "Thus says the Lord God: it shall also come to pass that at the same time shall things come into your mind, that you shall think an evil thought. Russia sees Israel as an evil target for plunder. Socialism never creates enough wealth. The Russians have always survived because the United States has reinforced it with loans, and given them technology, and helped them to do what they needed to do, or Russian communism would have long since been gone.

So, Russia gets an idea: "Let's go down there and plunder Israel, because Israel is the hub of three continents." Once you possess the land of Israel, you control Africa; you control Europe; and, you control Asia: "And you shall, "I will go up to the land of one-walled villages. I will go to those who are at rest, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls and having neither bars nor gate." This is a description that the Jews will not be a military power. They will be at peace.

Verse 12: " To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn your hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations (Jews who have been gathered from all nations), who've gotten cattle and goods, and who dwell in the midst of the land." This is when the Jews get back into the land. If you've ever been to Israel, you'd be surprised what they do with desert country. They have beautiful productivity. Now the Jews have turned to desert back to blooming. Russia says, "I'd like to have that." The Western nations, under the antichrist, are not going to like this, and they're going to protest this attack. They're going to start sending notes to one another.

Verse 13: "Sheba and Dedan (a couple of the Arab group), and the merchants of Tarshish." The merchants of Tarshish, generally, we think are Spain. It may be Britain. Then the next phase: "With all its lions," may indicate those who have come from these nations, which would include places like Australia, Canada, and the United States. We are a lion of Great Britain. And Tarshish may well refer to England. But he'll say to these Western nations: "Have you come to take a spoil? Have you gathered by company to take a prey, to carry away silver and gold, and to take away cattle and goods, to take spoil?"

The interesting thing is that they're going to protest. But Russia's not asking them. She's not saying, "Hey, we don't want you guys to get mad at us." She doesn't care what they think. So, who's stronger, and who is weak? The antichrist is strong, but Russia comes out of this treaty with Reagan, and the next treaty, with such tremendous strength that they will be able to thumb their nose even at the antichrist, when they are ready to make their move toward the Middle East, and toward the land of Israel.

However, God, the great card player of all times, has an ace up His sleeve. And if you'll come for the next session, we will play that card in this unfolding drama, and you will be awed by the holiness; the omnipotence; and, the justice of our God.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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