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One might be thoroughly well informed about the times and the signs of the times, about political and religious developments and about the course of events as a whole. Yet, if one did not have fellowship with God oneself, if one had not become a child of God at all, then that knowledge would merely be information for our minds, whilst our hearts and lives would come away empty.

Both are important. Firstly, that we find our way to God, that we experience the reconciliation that took place on Golgotha, and are thus born again by the Spirit of God unto a living hope, so that we may be part of what God has now begun and will also bring to completion with his church.

The following thought has also become very important to me recently. By nature, as scripture says, "***every person is dead in sins and trespasses.***" [Eph 2:1]

They do not feel at all that anything is missing; they are dead, spiritually dead, surrounded by many religious things, but spiritually dead.

It is only through the proclamation of the gospel that a person is shaken awake, comes to recognize their sin, realizes that they are separated from God and lost, and can then plead for salvation and grace, and thus experience God personally. When proclaiming the gospel, it is therefore important that people are truly awakened from their spiritual death and become aware that God does not desire the death of the sinner, but that all should repent and live. [2Pe 3:9].

And the Lord did indeed say, "***I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly.***" [Joh 10:10]

God has not brought a belief, a religion, or a denomination to the earth, but salvation has appeared to mankind. Titus chapter 2: "***For the grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men.***" [Tit 2:11]

Today we intend to talk about events that are of course very topical. So much is happening, the politicians are struggling to keep up, history, everything is overwhelming us. They are running behind, trying to keep up with events. So a great

deal is indeed happening right before our eyes, and we wouldn't have expected most of it at all; that is to say, the vast majority wouldn't have expected it at all.

This generation was after all used to the cold war continuing, a dividing line running through the country and the continent, and one side being at odds with the other, East against West, West against East. And lo and behold, for some time now, everything has become quite different. We are delighted by this development, and at the same time, if we may place it biblically, we can see all too clearly from it how late the hour has actually become.

And I'm sure I've written about this before and discussed it at length; recognizing and placing the images or symbols of the prophetic Word is actually the most important thing for us right now. And we must also hold this grace of God in high esteem, for how many read the Holy Scriptures, yet fail to grasp what is set out there and what it is all about. And let us truly be permitted hereto to give thanks to the Lord for the sending of his servant brother Branham, whom God has indeed used in a unique way in our generation. We ought simply to acknowledge God and respect what he does and thank him from the heart for it, so that we may then have a full share in God's blessing and in what he does.

It is indeed true that in the long run only those who walk with God can be blessed. Anyone who goes against God's work will not succeed; it will not be possible to stand one's ground before God. I am looking here at a scripture. Brother Müller has already read from the prophet Isaiah; I am looking here at Isaiah 55, and I would like to read a few scriptures, so that we know that this is not a lecture devised by human beings, but that we are reading from holy scripture.

First, Isaiah 55 from verse 6.

[6] ***Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:***

[7] ***Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.***

[8] ***For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.***

[9] ***For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.***

Particularly the verse read out first, "***Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.***" [Isa 55:6]

It will soon be confirmed and come to pass that the time of grace has ended, the door has been shut, and people will cry out to the mountains and hills, "***hide us from the wrath of him who sits on the throne.***" [Rev 6:16]

We shall read a few scriptures, and may I emphasize this once again: it is not our intention to frighten people, that would not be right. But if we do not give the final warning, then guilt will weigh upon us because we knew and did not tell others. So we must do so, even if it may make us look a little ridiculous at first. After all, when you talk about spiritual matters, you are regarded as a third-class citizen anyway, you don't fit into this society, you are an outsider and much more besides.

But we gladly accept this, sometimes not so gladly, but we simply accept it because that is the lot that has fallen to us. In the end, however, it will become clear that we have believed God, and God will stand by his Word, for this we have his guarantee that "***his Word will not return void, but will accomplish what it was sent to do.***" [Isa 55:11]

First and foremost, as has already been emphasized, what really matters is that our spiritual understanding of scripture is opened, so that we may gain access to that which is of a spiritual nature. And when Paul writes to the Corinthians, "***the natural man does not receive the things of the spirit of God***" [1Co 2:14], this is still true today.

The greatest professors may pore over scripture with their intellect, yet they do not understand God or God's Word; it must be revealed through the Holy Spirit, only then will we understand it and have access to these spiritual and divine things.

May God grant us during these few minutes, one might almost say, the grace, whilst we reflect, to glimpse just a little of what he has planned.

The message or theme for today could be described as follows: the second coming of Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. I believe that with this theme we are touching upon what it is all about. The truth is that we can truly look forward to the return of the Lord.

And these are not simply assertions we put out here because it suits us or because we want to; they are facts that have been clearly documented for us in the holy scriptures and which we believe. There are many scriptures, not all of which we will have time to read, in which the Lord has clearly said, "***I go to prepare a place for you. And I will come back to take you to be with me, so that you may be where I am.***" [Joh 14:2-3]

Thus it is written in John 14.

In Acts chapter 1 verse 11 it says, "***This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.***" [Act 1:11]

And then there are many scriptures, 1 Corinthians 15 from verse 51, 1 Thessalonians 4 from verse 13, and all the other scriptures, Matthew 25, and wherever else they may be found, which speak of this truly greatest event in the plan of salvation: the return of the Lord.

And the first question that then arises is: people have been talking about it for 2,000 years, they have been expecting it, and yet it has not happened to this day. Then one might add to the question: how can we know that the time has come now and not 400 or 200 years ago? And it is precisely this point, this point which gives us the absolute certainty that now is the time and not before. That is what matters, and this is brought so clearly before our eyes in Bible prophecy and its fulfillment that there can be no mistake.

And this is precisely because of the very precise description of the events that were foretold in Holy Scripture as signs of the end times. To put it in the Lord's own words, "***when you see all these things coming to pass, lift up your heads, for your redemption is drawing near.***" [Luk 21:28]

Those who know the Word, who have read the gospels and the epistles, know full well what is written therein, and here too it is important that we do not merely read what is written but that we place what is written in its proper context, namely where it truly belongs. The holy scriptures and what is stated in them are like a huge jigsaw puzzle; they simply have to be put together correctly, and when that happens, then one knows for certain that the matter is correct and thus has its validity.

Here, as I said, we will read a few scriptures, so that we can clearly see that we have now arrived at the time when Bible prophecy is being fulfilled before our very eyes. I would like to begin with the epistle of Peter; we are all of course familiar with the Holy Scriptures, but I shall read it nonetheless, 2 Peter chapter 1 from verse 19 ,and then include further passages in the reflection. 2 Peter chapter 1 from verse 19:

[19] ***We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:***

[20] ***Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.***

[21] ***For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.***

That is in fact the crux of the matter when it comes to God's Word and also to the prophetic aspect of our God's plan of salvation. God has spoken through human beings, that is why they were able to say, "Thus saith the Lord". And indeed, in the Bible we have God's Word, not the words of Moses or Elijah or Abraham or Isaiah, but in its entirety, it is God's Word, and God simply used spokesmen, men filled with the Holy Spirit, inspired, enlightened, and sent and used by God to proclaim and record his plan of salvation here on this earth in advance.

And this so that all future generations might have the opportunity to be assured that God does not say anything after the event, but that he has already been able to say it all in advance. I am becoming ever more grateful for God's Word, which truly

shines like a bright light in a dark place. What would we do without God's Word, just say it, we would have no guidance at all; we wouldn't have the faintest idea who God is, we wouldn't know what God wants, we wouldn't have the faintest idea what his plan is. We would truly be without direction. But now we have God's Word, and the closer we get to the fulfillment, the clearer things become to us: the things God has promised in his Word, the things he has announced, whether politically for the nations, religiously for the churches, or for Israel, for the church.

After all we find everything in the Holy Scriptures. It must be said, however, that much of it has been described in symbols and images. And anyone who is unfamiliar with these prophetic symbols or who does not understand their meaning and significance reads the Holy Scriptures, and when they have finished, they know just as much as they did before. But if by the grace of God we also read the prophetic Word of the Old Testament and then come to understand the symbols and can apply them to the New Testament, particularly to the last book of the Bible, then we can exclaim with Peter, "***we have a more sure word of prophecy.***" [2Pe 1:19]

So there is absolutely nothing to shake; rather it stands firm, just like the rock itself, immovable. So the prophetic Word that has been handed down to us, and I would also like to read the passage from Ephesians chapter 3, Ephesians chapter 3 verses 4 and 5.

[4] ***Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ***

[5] ***Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.***

The point then is that God is able to reveal these things to us. Prophets and apostles have drawn from this divine source of revelation. Today we are the ones who are allowed to draw from this divine source of revelation, and we can say with absolute certainty, yet without presumption, that we understand today exactly what was revealed to them back then, because it has also been revealed to us. For it is the same Word and the same Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth. And as Jesus said, "***he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you.***" [Joh 16:13-14]

And the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. [1 Cor 2:10]

It is wonderful that when considering the Holy Scriptures, we have the opportunity to verify them. These are not things that are simply put out there to see what happens. They are well-founded truths that simply stand as the Word of God, and as already mentioned, there's nothing to shake or unsettle about them. That is the wonderful thing about the Word of God, which we now also hold in high regard.

When we think of the prophet Daniel, for it was he who also foresaw the end times. He saw the great sea in turmoil, and here we have the first symbol, the four beasts rising up out of this great sea. What are we to make of it if we don't know what a beast signifies in Bible prophecy? I can still remember the Third Reich very well. I

had to wear the uniform when I was 12, and whenever some important-looking man came along, people would say, "he's a big shot." Then everyone knew, that's a big shot, he's got a say. Everyone stood to attention, didn't they? And we can see that they actually adopted this from Bible language; in the Bible, a beast represents a power, it can be a good power or an evil one, it can be a kingdom, it can be a ruler, in any case, power and exercise of power are represented by a beast. And most nations do after all have some sort of coat of arms featuring, for example, an eagle, a lion, a leopard. When you've travelled a lot, you realize how different nations have adopted these symbols as their own. They have taken it from the Bible, and look, when the prophet Daniel sees this and wonders what it means, he receives the answer, "***four kingdoms will arise on earth, each different from the others.***" [Dan 7:17]

And then he asks further, "but I would like more information about the fourth beast, not about the first three." He wanted more information about the last one, and so do I; I'm not interested in the first three at all anymore, they are a thing of the past. I want to know more about the last beast, the last empire, that's how the prophet Daniel felt back then.

And anyone who reads the book of Revelation will realize that the seer John did not see the first three at all. He saw only the last one, the one that is relevant to us now in the end times.

So, when one considers these things, the wisdom of God, and how he has ordered everything, one can only say, "My God, how great thou art, how great thou art."

As I said, we have now had these empires, the last one being the Roman empire. It was also partly called the Roman Empire of the German Nation. Emperors have been crowned and so on, and I have written about it.

This leading head of this empire, which received a deadly wound, the deadly wound has been healed before our very eyes. And lo and behold, the ancient Roman Empire is being fully revived. And when the Bible says in Revelation 13 "***and the whole world marveled***" [Rev 13:3] that this very power "***once was, and then was no more, and will be again***" [Rev 17:8]; the whole world is amazed at this.

But not us; we read it and say, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled before our very eyes."

And so, on the one hand, we are grateful, yet on the other, we are deeply moved, for we are drawing to the end.

And look, it's true of all the other empires that have existed in the meantime. I'm thinking in particular of the British Empire, which really did control roughly half the world until the Second World War. And then suddenly it fell apart.

The whole of Africa, the whole of Asia, they all became independent; they all wanted their sovereignty. Not to be facetious, but today one could indeed say that Great Britain has become a Little Britain.

And if one really considers this now in the light of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, then all this had to happen so that the Roman empire could come into being. All other empires must fall and must place their power at the disposal of this power until the words of God are fulfilled, Revelation chapter 17.

And so, we are witnessing now in recent times that not only has the one world empire collapsed, but we are also seeing in the last few months, indeed over the past year, that the great Soviet Empire with its 15 republics is also crumbling one after the other.

And the great empire is becoming small; why? So that here in central Europe, this European house may be established as foretold in Bible prophecy.

All other empires, however great they may be, will pale in comparison to this world empire that is now rising and taking shape.

But we do not wish to go into detail; our task is as follows: To recognize also by the signs of the times how far we have progressed, and that the coming of the Lord has consequently drawn nearer.

We have all clearly witnessed this now in the Gulf region.

On the first day when the invasion took place there, I said, "This is not about Kuwait; it's simply about provoking a situation so that one day the whole world will turn its attention to and against Israel."

And as I said, the politicians have already realized that this is not just about Kuwait and a certain Hussein, but about much more. It's about a strategy, namely to herald the end of the end and to arouse the whole world against the returned people of Israel.

At times, I have been tempted to send the politicians a written copy of the borders set by God for Israel as recorded in the books of Moses and Joshua. It makes no sense that they just say "that is occupied territory".

They must still regain the territory on the east bank of the Jordan that God has assigned to the two and a half tribes.

Israel is still nowhere near as large as God originally intended. And that is after all the only country for which God has defined the borders.

But to stir up trouble and then use day X as a pretext to launch the big strike.

However, as far as the current situation is concerned, we must make a distinction. Now the issue is Basra; who knows the meaning of Basra? Paradise. And that is exactly where paradise was. That is exactly where the four rivers begin as described to us in Genesis, which then go on to divide right there. Basra means paradise, and as I said, this is where it all begins in this region.

But from Jerusalem's perspective, it is to the east. And what will happen in the end will be north of Jerusalem. This can be read three times in the book of the prophet

Ezekiel.

But what is happening now is already a prelude and introduction to this global event about which much is written in Holy Scripture, including the war that will then bring death to the people whilst they are still standing on their feet. [Zech 14:12]

And the distribution of gas masks now; I can only smile at that. People must have some idea of what is written in the Bible, and you know of course the preparations for it.

And once again, it's German companies who made all this. Have you read it? Of course, the gas works, a German product; shame on our country.

But as I said, Zechariah 14, verse 12:

[12] ***And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet...***

This is what the prophet Zechariah foretold in Bible prophecy.

So, whilst they are still standing on their feet, their flesh will rot; I read on:

[12] ***...and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.***

Just imagine that; anyone who has read about Hiroshima knows a little bit about it, but this is going to be much worse.

It will be so aggressive that the effect will be felt almost immediately, and people will probably collapse while still wearing their gas masks. Their eyes, their tongues, will consume away whilst they are still standing there, and there will be dealt a blow from which there will be no escape.

But look, God has said so in his Word, and it is already evident today that this will happen.

And when the Holy Scripture say that God will indeed intervene personally and will finish the job with hailstones and everything that goes with it, but there's one thing that is important to recognize even when speaking of a holy war.

This phrase is already found in the prophet Joel; it is written there word for word. I shall read it to you; it calls for a holy war, namely in the prophet Joel chapter 4, verse 9.

Joel 4, verse 9:

[9] ***Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare for a holy war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up.***

[10] ***Beat your plowshares into swords...***

And so forth.

And then it says here in verse 12:

[12] ***Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.***

So it will come to pass, and what is happening now is actually intended to draw attention to this final great conflict.

And as you know, I have also been in the region; I've also been in Kuwait, I've been to Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and so on. I know the region a little. And all you need to do is take a look at your map.

You'd really have to search for tiny Israel with a magnifying glass to find it somewhere on the edge.

And then when you see the vast, immense expanses of the Arab world, there's still room for a few million, and why wouldn't they want them there, their own brothers?

Look, it's all a political issue; I've seen that too, right on the outskirts of Amman in Jordan, that the artificial Palestinian camps are being maintained even though the big Mercedes is parked outside the door and the TV aerials on every shack point skywards.

But the people have to stay there so that one can say, "There you go, they are still here," instead of granting them the freedom to find their own homes and so on.

But as I said, let's not go into these matters any further. It has to be this way so that the whole world is outraged and indignant and says, "Israel, how dare you."

And we have also seen the recent UN resolutions; even America has now voted in favor of them.

And it is almost outrageous when all you hear is what the Israelis have done and no longer hear what the other side has done.

I didn't see it myself, but it has been reported that there were baskets of stones on top of the wall and they were then thrown down. There were baskets set up from which things were thrown down; no one reports on that. There has probably never been as much injustice on earth as there is now.

And even in the press coverage there is so much bias that it could make one angry, because one can see through the motives behind it without needing the wisdom of Solomon.

So, indeed, things are happening in our day that point in every way to the end. And the end is drawing near. We have often enough read from Matthew 24, Luke 21, Luke 17, and the various passages in Holy Scripture which now actually speak of the last days of the end times.

And also in the epistles of the apostles, Paul in particular spoke of the last days in his letters to Timothy.

1 Timothy chapter 4, verse 1:

[1] ***Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;***

[2] ***Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;***

[3] ***Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats…***

And so on.

Very beautiful on the outside, but God sees right through it. And what might outwardly be regarded as so holy and pious, God describes as doctrines of devils.

There are also very kind people among the believers. And then when you hear from some people about marriage, for example, because it is written here that marriage will be banned.

Did you know that God ordained this in the beginning and said, "***it is not good for man to be alone***"? [Gen 2:18]

Who wants to set aside the divine order? Everything else is an exception; it is not the rule. The rule is that man is not meant to be alone. God created a helper for him who fits to him.

But when an entire church and many others now believe they do not have to marry, this is regarded as a special sacrifice. The Bible describes it quite differently in the passage we have just read.

In 2 Timothy chapter 3, it says starting from verse 1:

[1] ***This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.***

[2] ***For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers…***

There is a whole list.

Read it if you have the time and see it is coming to pass before our very eyes.

There really has never been a time like this. I can still remember well, even in our day, that people would greet one another with a good morning or a good afternoon whether they knew each other or not.

Nowadays, anyone walks past anyone else; one doesn't know the other and doesn't see them. Times have changed so much, and one is the other's enemy.

So, love will grow cold in many, and faith will no longer be what it once was. [Mat 24:12]

That is why the Lord said, "***will the Son of man find faith on earth when he comes?***" [Luk 18:8]

People believe all sorts of things these days; they believe the pope, they believe the churches. People believe, but they don't believe God, and that is after all the crux of the matter.

And even those who believe in God still struggle to believe him, that is, to believe what he has said in his Word.

This brings us back to John chapter 7 when our Lord said, "***whoever believes in me as the scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from his body.***" [Joh 7:38]

Faith in God is important, but in James it says, "***even the devil believes and trembles.***" [Jas 2:19]

Not merely believing in God, but believing what God has told us in his Word, to thus agree with God and take his side and no longer resist him, but resist the enemy and submit ourselves to God.

As for other matters concerning the end times, we have said it often enough: whether it be earthquakes, famines, or all the wars, rumors of wars, plagues of every kind.

If one looks at the statistics now, how epidemics right up to AIDS, everything is on the rise and no cure, no remedy, no solution; what is it? And things are still getting worse on this earth.

When the Lord said, "***it will be just as it was in the days of Noah and in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah,***" [Luk 17:26-30] then we must say, "Lord, you spoke the truth; that is how it is, and it has become even worse than it was back then."

The fear of God has departed from mankind. The outward form of godliness of religion has been preserved, but the inner life, the connection with God, is no longer there.

Therefore, as briefly indicated at the beginning, the main thing is that through the proclamation of the gospel, people are brought into connection with the one whom the proclamation concerns: with Jesus Christ our Lord.

For there is not just a gospel; there is the one gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord; there is no other.

And so, this gospel must be preached "***for a witness to all nations.***" [Mat 24:14]

But imagine if I were to take this Bible and go to some bishop in Salzburg to whom, after all, a great deal of Salzburg belongs, and to the Roman church as well.

I do not know what percentage of Salzburg belongs to the church, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to get a hall, and if you don't take a seat at the right table today, then you won't get a seat at all.

You'll be shown the door, and in the end, you might end up somewhere on the street having to preach the gospel there.

But what I wanted to say is this: if we were to knock on the church doors today with a clear proclamation of God's Word, I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, who would open the door to us?

As it was in the days of Jesus, so it is today. People do not want God wherever he is needed, and then politicians start talking about him too, quoting Bible verses left, right, and center, and yet one really doesn't want anything to do with the one who spoke those words.

But we do, after all, live in a time when religion, when all powers make pacts, when they join forces.

And in this regard, I have actually come across a few statements by our highly esteemed Mr. Ratzinger, in which he also remarked that people take issue with this.

What is this all about? The point is that all powers are now uniting, but without Christ the head.

In this great union, Christ is not the head; rather, one does not wish to say it aloud, one must say it quite quietly: the Antichrist will be the head of this entire composition and constellation.

Christ has his eye on the little flock. It is the Father's pleasure to give the kingdom to the little flock. [Luk 12:32]

And with this small flock, he is in charge; there he is the good shepherd, and the little flock are the sheep of his pasture. He leads them, he guides them, he feeds them, he waters them; he wants them to have life, and that they have it more abundantly. [Joh 10:10]

So, in these last days, there will be two things in the spiritual realm.

There will be a union of all churches and fellowships and denominations in the ecumenical movement via the World Council of Churches.

And we already know today who will be in charge and have the final say; it will never be put to a vote or decided. That has long since been decided; that was decided a long time ago.

And yet there will also be the small flock, as I said, the church of Jesus Christ, which simply out of conviction and because it is of a different nature, namely of divine nature, cannot go along with this political issue which is merely cloaked in religion.

And this small flock will then be labeled as unacceptable to society, because everyone is expected to go along with it.

The whole thing will be so wonderful and so pleasant that anyone who doesn't go along with it must surely be out of their mind to not only refuse to take part in such a wonderful thing, but even reject it and so on.

But from this Word of God, we have recognized what is at stake: not the false peace that politicians are now achieving and which will then be blessed, but peace with God.

The peace with God of which Paul writes to the Romans:

"***Therefore since we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...***" [Rom 5:1]

Anyone who forges a peace without having found peace with God through Jesus Christ must be told: this is a political-religious false peace that is doomed to failure; only peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord endures for all time and for eternity.

But even that should not be said too loudly, for these people, as already mentioned repeatedly, invoke the name of God in order to make a pious impression on others and also to look very good in their own eyes.

In these words that we have read, to which we can briefly add others or at least quote them, the real point is: to recognize now the promises that God has given to believers. Just as there are prophecies concerning political and religious developments, so too are there prophecies for the church of the Lord, for example, that he would send a prophet before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes [Mal 4:5] and regarding this day of the Lord, I would like to read that passage so that everyone may know that it is indeed written in the Bible. 2 Peter chapter 3, verse 10.

[10] ***But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.***

I did not say that; God said it in the Old and New Testament. I would like to read from the prophet Malachi, Malachi the last chapter; in verse 1 it is written:

[1] ***For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up.***

That day is coming, and now that the day of grace and the day of salvation is drawing to a close, and it is drawing to a close. I've written about it in that little booklet, Vision 7000, and I would ask everyone to take a copy with them afterwards. But with God one day is like a thousand years [2Pe 3:8] for us.

So it is written in the Old and New Testament. And when we consider that God created the world in 6 days and rested on the 7th day, he blessed and sanctified the 7th day and rested from all his works [Gen 2:2-3].

So roughly speaking, we are now actually approaching the 6000 years since Adam. And the 7th Millennium will indeed according to the Word of God, Revelation 20, be the millennial kingdom of peace of Christ on earth. So roughly 2000 years from Adam to Abraham, another 2000 from Abraham to Christ, and now we are approaching precisely these next and third 2000 years. And the 7th Millennium will indeed be the millennial kingdom. And thereafter time will once again flow into eternity.

We have in every sense arrived at the last generation. No one knows how many years there may still be, no one. But to speculate now that it takes so and so long would be wrong. Yet to say, "Well, then if that's the case, I don't need to do anything more" would also be wrong. To remain sober-minded, to turn to God, to live for the Lord, to serve and follow him, to allow oneself to be prepared precisely for the glorious day of our Lord's return, that is surely the order of the day. Do not become intoxicated and go on the streets and speak incoherently but remain clear-headed and sober until the end.

Here we have read: know this, the day is coming, and that is the day of the Lord. And it will burn like an oven. [Mal 4:1]

There are so many scriptures about the day of the Lord, both in the Old and New Testament. One of the most powerful passages in the Old Testament is Isaiah chapter 13. I would just like to read two or three verses from Isaiah chapter 13 starting from verse 6.

[6] ***Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.***

[7] ***Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:***

[8] ***And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.***

And so that we may all know precisely in what context this is being said, specifically regarding the day of the Lord and what will be associated with this day of the Lord, I would like to read this once more very clearly, namely from the prophet Joel. We read from the prophet Joel in chapter 3, Joel chapter 3, and you will see that the day of the Lord is already connected with a great military mobilization as has now already been heralded. I'm not saying this; God's Word tells us this. And I would like to read it out here very clearly: Joel chapter 2, verse 1.

[1] ***Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand;***

[2] ***A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.***

In connection with the day of the Lord, mention is made in the same breath of the great army, the like of which has not been seen on such a scale since the dawn of humanity. And as was said earlier, everything truly points to this. And if anyone thinks we are here to cause panic, they are mistaken, but we cannot possibly conceal what we now recognize on the basis of the Word of God. It must be proclaimed, it must be said. And if people do not listen, they are still without excuse.

They simply have not taken the warning seriously. For look, so much is spoken of the day of the Lord. Here it is made clear, here the context is shown to us in great detail how the day of the Lord will begin. And we have just read it here:

[1] ***...for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand;***

[2] ***A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.*** [Joe 2:1-2]

And Brother Müller and we who know the Word of God know that this refers to Gog and Magog, Revelation 20, when Satan is released from prison, when it says here: "***even to the years of many generations***".

But let us now turn to our subject and to our own time. What has now been summarized here from all over the world has merely shown us how quickly such an action can be carried out. And that is exactly what will happen. And we are after all sensible enough to know that the Palestinians as a whole will not give us any peace. They won't stop. Hezbollah, the holy war, will have its own way of starting things. There will be no more peace or tranquility in the region until God brings about peace and tranquility in his own way. But what is becoming very clear is that the final phase is now indeed being ushered in before our very eyes. And as has already been suggested, if the situation continues to be fueled and 18, 20-year-old lads who actually don't want war at all are told, "Allah will look upon you with favor if you do this and that, you will be in paradise". People are told this and they just go and do it. And so it will fuel tensions to such an extent that the international community will feel compelled to act. There's no other way. It will be a truly unavoidable situation. But then, when the world begins to act or thinks it can deliver the massive blow, that is when God strikes.

I'll read you a passage about what God will do next. I don't know, I'm not happy about the fact that people will perish, no. But I'm glad that God will be glorified and that he will show all of humanity that they are not in charge but that he has the final say in heaven and on earth over Israel and over the nations. Ezekiel 38,

Ezekiel 38 from verse 22.

[22] ***And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.***

[23] ***Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.***

So God will cause fire and brimstone mixed with hailstones to rain down from the heavens. And behold, it will come to a dreadful end for all these great nations that have marched forth as an army. To link this clearly with Revelation 19, I shall read from Ezekiel 39. Ezekiel 39. I won't read from verse 8 or 9, but it says there that they will burn the remaining weapons for 7 years.

And that is written in verse 10, verses 9 and 10 of Ezekiel 39. And in verse 12 it says that they will be busy with the burial for 7 months to cleanse the land.

So one can imagine what needs to be buried there if 7 months are required to carry out the burial of these people who are perishing there. I wouldn't want to be there when the burials take place, but that is what is written in the Word of God and so it shall be. I read verse 12 as it is written:

[12] ***And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land.***

So it is written. Verse 17 reads:

[17] ***And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood.***

[18] ***Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth...***

And so on and so forth.

Yes, there will be plenty laid out, and the birds of the air will help themselves to the meal there for a very short time until the funeral has taken place. But the same thing is written in Revelation 19, just so you know that it will indeed happen before the establishment of the millennium, namely Revelation 19 verse 11. Here we are told how the Lord as King of Kings will then come down to wage the final war and so on.

And in verse 17 it says, Revelation 19 verse 17:

[17] ***And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and***

gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

[18] ***That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains...***

And so forth.

It is 100% the same in both the New and Old Testament because the same event is described by the prophets and also by the apostles. Let us please summarize what we are discussing here this afternoon. Firstly it is about us now realizing that the return of Jesus Christ our Lord is imminent. He gave the promise in John 14: "***I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come back to take you to be with me.***" [Joh 14:2-3]

And now that the time is fulfilled, he will return to take his own to himself. And we shall then be with him in glory, whilst disasters befall this earth.

At the moment we are the ones who are mocked and ridiculed, but then we will be the ones who rejoice and take part in the marriage supper with the Lord. But during that time the terrible judgments will come and with them the final reckoning with all God's enemies who are after all also enemies of Israel. Whoever is an enemy of Israel is a declared enemy of God. No one can say they love God and hate Israel. Such a person ought to get their head straight. God is the God of Israel. He has chosen his people, and whoever "***touches the people of Israel, saith the Lord God, touches the apple of his eye."*** [Zec 2:8]

And so we too must state this clearly. And then the Lord has indeed given us the clear signs of the end times with all these disasters. And now we might say, "Well, so far it hasn't really affected us that much". Yes, but we haven't reached the end yet. In one part of the world there's famine, in another there are floods, in a third there are earthquakes. They are spread all over the world. These catastrophes are not all in Salzburg or in Austria or here in Bavaria. They are spread all over the world.

Consequently, it can be said everywhere that Scripture is being fulfilled before our very eyes. Paul looked, as we all know according to what he wrote to the Thessalonians, in 1 Thessalonians 5 from verse 1, he looked to the end of the last days. And he did indeed see everything settled in "***peace and safety"*** [1Th 5:3].

No more wars and rumors of wars. [Mat 24:6] No more famines would then be the main concern. The main concern at the time of the end will simply be peace and safety.

And everything is working towards this peace, and this safety is now the focus in a very rapid manner. And as I said before, things are coming thick and fast. This weekend the twelve are gathered in Rome once again to sort everything out and decide how everything should go on with the European Central Bank and so on. And everyone will be involved: some advancing, others retreating. In the end everyone, including the EFTA countries, will be part of the deal because geographically they

simply belong to the old Roman Empire, and no one can resist that, not even a well-off country like Switzerland. Everyone: some on the way in, others on the way back, but they will be all part of it because that's just the way it is.

Let us be glad that we are witnessing this, but that we are able to recognize from it how far time has advanced. That is the main thing now. And in this union one thing is very important, since it is after all a religious union under the head of the Antichrist, that one must speak out clearly and take a clear stand for Christ, for him and his Word, and place oneself quite clearly on the Lord's side. We must not go along with the masses, however pleasant that might be for us as human beings. But that is not the way of the Lord's church. The way of the church is the narrow way that leads to life and not the broad way that leads to destruction. [Mat 7:13-14]

The catchphrases "peace and safety" have since the days of Gorbachev taken on a special significance; they have made headlines and continue to do so. As I said, so much has happened across Europe in recent months since October and November of last year. Most people would not have thought it possible. And I tell you today, if the Lord grants us another year or two, I do not know, maybe 100 or 10, God knows, but we will be able to look back time and again and say we would not have expected all this so soon, up to the point where God will reveal himself, confirm his Word, bless his people and fulfill his promises, so that we too might one day say: "God's Word has been fulfilled in us as well."

It is not enough if we can only say that it is now being fulfilled politically and then in Israel and throughout the world. How wonderful will be the day when we can say "today, right now, God's Word has been confirmed as true in us." Only then will we truly be able to rejoice and shout for joy. Today we view all this with a certain wistfulness. It does hurt after all to see everything heading for ruin like this. Nevertheless we are grateful to God that we can see and consider the overall development in the light of the prophetic Word and are able to proclaim as Peter did back then: "***we have a more sure word of prophecy.***" [2Pe 1:19]

And then comes the exhortation: "***and you do well to pay attention to it, as unto a bright light shining in a dark place.***" [2Pe 1:19]

God's revealed Word has become a light on our path. It has become a lamp to our feet. [Psa 119:105]

We are grateful to our God for that.

Finally a word of warning. If there is anyone among us who has not yet dedicated their life to the Lord or who is still considering whether or not to do so, take to heart the words from the Psalm and the epistle to the Hebrews: "***Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.***" [Psa 95:7-8, Heb 3:7-8].

The Lord lets his final call resound: "***Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest for your souls.***" [Mat 11:28-29]

And then the word: "***whoever comes to me, I will in no wise cast out.***" [Joh 6:37]

Today is still the time of grace, today is still the day of salvation, but woe betide us when it comes to an end, and it is coming to an end. Just as surely as God is God and has set a timetable for mankind and we are now living at the end of the time of grace, so surely the day of salvation will soon be over. And the terrible day of the Lord with its judgments will descend upon this earth.

This will happen according to the testimony of Scripture and the signs of the times and the fulfillment of Bible prophecy in our generation. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. [Rev 2, Rev 3]

And whoever wishes to choose the Lord should not take time to think it over, but should seize the opportunity God has given us to make our decision for him. God is not interested in excuses, but only in the decision.

The young people here might say, "I'm still too young." The elderly might say, "I still have time." And one might say, "I've taken a wife, I cannot come" [Luk 14:20], "I've bought a field, I must first go and work it" [Luk 14:18].

You know the Bible of course, they all looked for excuses, and the Lord was sad, very sad. He even became angry and sent out servants again with a message, "***Go to the hedges and fences, invite and bring them in, whoever you find, bring them in.***" [Luk 14:23]

Now is the time. The final invitation is being issued now, and whoever is called, whoever hears the Word, it won't let him go. The Word will remain within them as a call, as a divine call, in those who have heard it, and will draw until they have come to the Lord.

May this come to pass today by grace. Amen.

Let us now rise for prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for this day. We thank you for your precious and holy Word. We thank you for the insight, for the clarity, for the enlightenment and revelation of your Spirit. Beloved Lord, you have granted us grace in your sight. We pray for all those who have raised their hands. Beloved Savior, bless them, save them, forgive them, and accept them as sons and daughters of God. And to all those whom you have called, but who did not have the courage to raise their hands, be merciful to them for your name's sake. Let no one be lost, oh Lord, but save, be merciful, and grant salvation whilst the time of grace still lasts and the day of salvation is still here before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.

Faithful God, we also come with all our prayer requests, with all our intercessions, which express the needs of one and all, oh Lord. We ask you together, be merciful

to us all. Hear our prayers. May our intercessions come before your throne of grace, answer us speedily, confirm your Word, and bless your people.

Beloved Lord, once again we thank you together for this afternoon we have experienced. We have been reminded, oh God, that you foretold everything precisely and had it written down in advance so that we may know when these things begin to take place that the time is near.

Faithful God, we thank you deeply for the prophetic Word, for the true heavenly instruction and enlightenment. Oh Lord, we also thank you for sending your servant and messenger in our days to draw our attention to the various things we would not have known on our own. We give thanks for your care, for all your acts of grace. Please, save everyone, set everyone free, and bless everyone from the riches of your grace. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.