

The Sign of the Lord's Return

by Charles E. Fuller

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being ready for the Lord's return, highlighting the sign of the budding fig tree and the significance of the Olivet Discourse in understanding end-time events.

Duration: 51:20

Scripture: Psalm 46:1, Isaiah 41:10, John 14:6, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Philippians 4:13, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Second Coming Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, Dr. Charles E. He will save emphasizes the message of salvation and the unshakable faith in God. He encourages the congregation to trust in the Savior and believe that He will save them. The sermon also touches on the importance of Christian mothers and the need to preserve the sanctity of the home. Dr. He will save urges the audience to appreciate the blessings of Heavenly Sunshine and to spread joy and happiness to others.

Transcript

Free in Cooperation with Fuller Seminary proudly presents the Old-Fashioned Revival Hour, a broadcast of the Gospel with Dr. Charles Eagle. on the Old-Fashioned Revival. Greetings, friends.

From Belsass, Ireland, an interesting and appealing letter. Dear Reverend Fuller, I am a man in my early 20s, and your program means so much to me, but I would enjoy it better if I had the joy in salvation which you possess. I know there is no hope for me, but I am asking you to pray for me as you're a man of God.

Very few preach like you today. God spoke to me quite early in life, but of course I thought I had plenty of time, and then a few years ago I realized that I had breathed the Holy Spirit. I've been praying ever since, but no matter how much I try, I can't get this out of my mind.

I am always frightened of dying without Christ. I do enjoy Mrs. Fuller's reading of those letters, also that beautiful music, and your sermons inspire me. I do hope God will answer your prayers for me, that I may find salvation.

A letter from a Chinese pastor of the Mandarin-speaking church in Taiwan, Formosa. Dear Dr. Fuller, we announce your hour in the biggest newspaper of Free China in order that a larger audience can be reached for you, because I myself didn't know of your precious program until four months ago when I turned accidentally to it, although I could have been hearing it for six years before. And then this man asks

for prayer for their radio program going out in Mandarin.

From a construction camp in British Columbia, greetings in the name of Jesus, the name that has the same comforting sound all over the globe. Never before has your program been such a blessing to me as it was last Sunday. There are four of us Christians out here in what we might call the wilderness of sin.

In this construction camp of approximately 400 men, we have no Christian fellowship with the outside world save by the radio. Sunday evening we turned the radio on loud when your program came on, so that all in the bunkhouse could hear. And did we ever enjoy it.

We desire to hear the gospel like a heart that panteth after the water brooks. It feeds us and strengthens us in God. Dear leader of the Old Fashioned Revival Hour, I am an Icelander living in the north part of Iceland, pastor of a Lutheran church here.

I try never to miss your program through Radio Luxembourg. It comes as an awakening every time. It inspires me in my work.

Think of me and pray for my work, please. I'm sure that God sent your hour to me so far up north. Still everything is covered with snow and the north wind is blowing heavily.

We are glad you come to us with your inspiration, though in such a roundabout way, from California via Luxembourg. Dear Mr. Fuller, I was in the regular army during the Second World War and was in the Army of Occupation in Luxembourg after the war was over. When I ever I hear you mention that broadcast, I cannot help feeling how wonderful that is and how wonderful that would have been if we had had such a broadcast when I was over there.

And then this last letter is sweet from an old lady and I think that old folks, to them sometimes youth seems such a little ways away and their memories are so very precious. It doesn't seem to them always that youth was so far back. This little old lady writes a very sweet letter.

Dear Reverend Fuller, I live in this old folks home, in bed all the time, 83 years old and how I do love and look forward all week to your service each Sunday. I used to sing in the church choir when I was young and pretty and they said I had a good voice too. The wonderful man that I married said he fell in love with me when he saw me there singing in our little white church choir on a bright May morning.

I remember I wore a bunch of lilacs on my shoulder that day and we were married in that little church the next year. My memories are very sweet. Many years have passed since then and here I am a wrinkled little old lady just waiting for God to call me home, to be reunited with the loved ones and to look on his face.

I am all alone and it seems there isn't much to hold me here but that is in God's hands and I will be patient. I feel his presence with me all the time and when the old-fashioned revival hour is on it almost seems that I've gone to heaven. The music is so sweet.

The program just feeds our souls and encourages us old folks to keep on happily waiting. Isn't that a good letter? God bless all the old folks today as they listen in. That is all I shall have time for.

Alright, I love this song. Meet me there. Our Heavenly Father we thank thee that we thy children who rest upon the authority of the scriptures have not only the hope but the certainty that we will be in heaven with

thee for eternity.

How thankful we are that we can come from this world of confusion to thee, a God who art all knowing and all-powerful, loving and righteous. Father we do thank thee that we've been reconciled to thee by faith in thy son through the blood of Jesus Christ and how thankful we are for the certainty that surely goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives. Father we pray especially today for the leaders of our nation upon whom are such heavy responsibilities in these trying days.

We pray that they may seek more and more the wisdom which is from thee which is so far more perfect than anything we have in our own weak capacities. Bless our fighting men and their loved ones who remain behind. Comfort and encourage both of them and may this broadcast as it goes forth into the continent of America and into the lands across the oceans may it bring comfort and courage to sin-sick hearts.

We ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. You're listening to the Old-Fashioned Revival Hour with Dr. Charles E. Fuller.

The message today is titled, The Sign of the Lord's Return. Open your Bibles to the book of Matthew chapter 24 as we rejoin the broadcast. I'll return after Dr. Fuller's message to provide you additional information.

When sunlight through darkness and shadow is breaking, that Jesus will come in the morn of glory to redeem the world. It may be at midday, it may be at twilight, it may be first at the blackness of midnight, we'll burst into light in the day of His birth. How long, e'er we shout the Lord's song, life eternal, Amen.

Hallelujah, Amen. Amen. Sweet power of grace, we have called in seasons of distress, and by thy return peace has lost its hide.

I build my home at this robe of flesh I've brought, and rise to see thee evermore, and shout while passing through the air, Farewell, farewell, sweet farewell. And now please have your Bibles open to the 24th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew 24.

The Olivet Discourse is indeed a great prophecy, the King's last great utterance before he ascended to be at the right hand of the Father. This prophecy recorded in Matthew 24 and 25 and Mark 13 and Luke 21 was spoken in answer to three questions propounded by Peter, James, John, and Andrew. And this prophecy, the Olivet Discourse, sets forth not only the characteristics of the days since Calvary, but especially the day just prior to our Lord's second coming, that is, His return from heaven in power and in great glory.

You see, I have to preach upon the second coming because so many pastors never do it, and I have to sort of help you believers out once in a while. As we meditate upon this Olivet Discourse, we should bear in mind that in point of time there's been a partial fulfillment, that is, such as the destruction of the great and beautiful temple in A.D. 70, some 40 years after the prophecy was uttered. But the greater portion of the discourse is yet to be fulfilled, and personally I believe that the final fulfillment of this prophecy uttered by our Lord may be sooner than we realize.

So will you give careful attention, as you usually do, and may we sit truly in heavenly places, trusting the Holy Spirit to enlighten us as we look into His precious word. And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled? For such things must need be, but the end shall not be yet. And then nation

rising against nation, kingdom against kingdom, that there shall be earthquakes in diverse places, and there shall be famines and pestilence and trouble.

Then these very significant words, these are the beginnings of sorrow. And the point is this, we've always had wars and rumors of wars for the past 2,000 years, but when you see a global conflict, nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom, synchronized with earthquakes, pestilences, and famines, notice these are the beginnings of sorrow. Now, please bear that in mind.

In other words, the beginning of sorrows, or the birth pangs, that is the death agony of this age, is the birth agony of the next. And in Romans, the 8th chapter, 22nd verse, we find these words, for we, speaking always when you have the word we, believers, for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, and the figure of a child being brought into this world. And as the time of delivery approaches, and just a few moments or perhaps a few hours before the delivery of the child, the birth pangs become more frequent.

That is the thought of verse 8 of Mark 13. The whole creation is groaning, but when we see a synchronizing of these things, it is the frequency of the birth pains that tell us that the old age is dying, that a new age is about to break forth upon this earth. And so, verse 8 of Mark 13 speaks of the great rapidity, the frequency, the synchronizing of events, the beginnings of sorrow.

Now, I give you that as a brief review that we might go back to the 24th of Matthew and study this great Olivet discourse. Copy this down if you so wish. This great Olivet discourse outlined in the 24th and 25th of Matthew is divided into three general sections.

First, 24, verse 4 to 44. Second, 24, 45 to 25, 30. And third, chapter 25, verse 31 to 46.

But it's upon the first section, Matthew 24, 4 to 44, we plan to spend a considerable time. In other words, a series of messages within the series upon the Olivet discourse. So read Matthew 24 and 25 over and over and over.

And in these two chapters, the Lord passes over the answer to the disciples' first question, when shall these things be? In Mark and Luke, this first question is answered and was fulfilled some forty years after Calvary. As I said a moment ago, in A.D. 70, the temple was destroyed. But in Matthew 24 and 25, we find the Lord's answers to the second and third questions as follows.

What is the sign of thy coming? What is the sign of the consummation or the completion of the age, the end days, just prior to our Lord's second coming? Now with an open Bible, turn to these chapters. My earnest prayer is that the Holy Spirit will do His great office work. I'm not going to go off on the deep end and be fanatical and bring a lot of extraneous matters in, but stay right with the Word.

Now notice, as we look into God's eternal Word, heaven and earth may pass away, but God's Word will never pass away. And every detail that He has outlined will come to pass in the spite of the counsels of the ungodly. In verses 5 and 6, as in Mark 13, 5 to 7, we again see the general characteristics of the age between Calvary and the Lord's second coming, wars and rumors of war.

And then note the conclusion, all these things in verse 6, all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. And then in verse 7, as in Mark chapter 13 and 8, the rapidity, the intense frequency of world sorrows in the days just preceding our Lord's visible return. And thus beginning with chapter 24, verse 9 to 44, the Olivet Discourse goes into more detail regarding end-time events.

That is, when the frequency of end-day events began, then one can expect the following events to take place, and to take place rapidly. Intense persecution against God's earthly people, Israel. World War II saw that, the camps of Buchenwald and other terrible death camps.

God's earthly people, Israel, have been persecuted as no other nation. Verse 11, false prophets. Verses 12 and 13, lawlessness to abound.

Here it is, and because iniquity, lawlessness shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold. That is, some departing from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Then verse 14, the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom.

And I say to you on the authority of God's word, that this world is yet to see the greatest missionary worldwide activity since the dawn of human history, just prior to the Lord's return. There will be perhaps the 144,000, sealed out of every tribe of Israel, that will go out like Paul, one born out of due season, and preach, behold, he cometh, and preach the gospel of the kingdom unto all nations as a witness. Then shall the end come.

God raises up a standard when the enemy comes in like a flood, and godless nations will yet hear the truth of the Lord's return. And then in 15 to 20 of Matthew 24, the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet. We'll enlarge upon that in a later broadcast.

And then verses 21 and 22, the great tribulation. Listen. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be.

And Antichrist, the man of sin, the great world ruler, will be upon the throne, ruling. And then Revelation 13, no man be able to buy or sell, save he hath the mark of the beast, will then be enforced. Know your Bible.

Be able to give a reason for the hope that is within you. And then verses 23 to 26, false Christ, especially the manifestation of the Antichrist for the false prophets, as in the days of Elijah. And then verse 27, listen.

For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. The great consummation of the age, the personal, visible, glorious, powerful return of Christ. Now verse 32, now you see the Holy Spirit's a master teacher.

After laying out the outline of end-day events, he says, now learn. And he gives you an illustration. Learn the parable of the fig tree.

When his branches yet tender and forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the door. And I say to you, upon the authority of God's word, as I'll try to bring out to you in a few moments, that verse 32, the budding of the fig tree, is in reference to the regathering of God's earthly people, Israel, from the four winds, and their establishment not in the land of Palestine now.

Don't be misled. It's the land of Israel now. Don't refer to it as Palestine, for just in May 1948, overnight, a nation scattered to the four winds of the earth, with no rest for the sole of her feet, persecuted strangers and pilgrims, suddenly was recognized as a nation among the nations of earth.

You'll have, in my humble judgment, the budding of the fig tree, which I'll enlarge upon next Lord's Day. Now, today, the sign of the Lord's return. That is after the Lord has set forth these events.

Now, learn something. Heaven and earth, verse 34, I'm just getting started. I may have to close right in the middle of my message.

This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away. Then he refers to the days of Noah, and also how there'll be two in the field.

One shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Then he winds up with these words. Therefore, be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man is coming.

Here in Matthew 24, 32, in my humble judgment, we find the sign of the Lord's return. And for 34 long years, God has given me the blessed privilege of preaching on the Lord's return. When I started out 34 years ago to preach this wonderful truth, I wondered how certain things would come to pass.

And I'm thankful to my Heavenly Father today that I stand in front of this worldwide broadcast, and I say to you that he's permitted me to live, to see things come to pass now that we're on the very threshold of the Lord's return. Hallelujah. Things are happening.

Now in the Scriptures, Israel is referred to under three emblems. I'll mention them today and enlarge upon them next Lord's Day. First, a vine in a vineyard.

You'll read Isaiah 5, 1 to 7 between now and next Lord's Day. Second, Israel is referred to an olive tree, the leavens of Romans. How that the olive branch was broken off and a wild olive branch, the Gentiles, contrary to nature, was grafted in.

But when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, God will break off the wild olive branch and regraft Israel into the olive tree. It's about to take place. And then the fig tree as a picture of Israel.

Turn in your Bibles quickly to the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of Luke, verses six and seven. Here it is. He spake also this parable.

A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon and found nothing. And then in the twenty-first chapter of Luke, verse twenty-nine, we find these words. And he spake unto them a parable.

Behold the fig tree and all the trees, Gentiles as well as Israel. And then in Matthew 21, 18, here we have it. Listen.

Now in the morning, as he returned unto the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it and found nothing thereon but leaves only. He said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth.

And the tree became withered. Now listen. The barren fig tree is cursed.

Hear the fig tree, the withered fig tree, a type of Israel's spiritual and national death. And for nearly two thousand years, Israel out of the land spattered among the nations. But wait, we have the budding of the fig tree.

And anyone familiar with the nature of a fig tree knows that when it buds, that fruit and leaves are found together. For as soon as a branch becomes tender, the fruit is found. And it speaks of rapid development.

And Israel's blessing, new life, new fruit, new glory will be quickly realized in the end days. And coupled with Israel's new life, the budding of the fig tree, the events of chapters twenty-four and twenty-five of Matthew, will come to pass with great rapidity. Wake up! The return of the Lord is very near.

The next Lord's day will enlarge upon this budding. Will you notice Matthew twenty-four, thirty-three? So likewise when ye shall see all these things, know that it, revised version, he is near, even at the door. And how long before he calls his church out during these past two thousand years, the Holy Spirit's been calling out a people for his name? And when the last soul is saved that completes the body of Christ, God will say to the church, come on up.

As he said to Noah before the waters of judgment came upon the earth, he said to Noah, come thou into the ark. Christ will say to the church, come on up hither. And the dead in Christ shall arise first, and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

When? I don't know, but watch and pray and be ye also ready. And the only way to be ready is to be our new creation in Christ Jesus and be washed in the precious blood of Calvary. Are you ready? Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Friends out in the radio audience, may the Holy Spirit convict you now as you've never been convicted, that you see your need before God a lost soul, without Christ, without God, without hope, outside the ark of safety in Christ Jesus. Come now, come unto the audience, labor heavily. I'll give you a rest, may you kneel right where you are.

Give your heart to Christ today and be found in the body of Christ before the judgments of God fall. Quickly now in this fine audience, how many will put their hands up and say, pray for me. I here and now want to accept Christ as my personal Savior.

We'll continue the altar call at the close of the broadcast. Continue in prayer, please. This is Charles E. Fuller bidding you goodbye and God's richest blessing upon you.

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