

What Time Is It? Christ's Coming

by F.J. Huegel

The speaker reflects on the signs of the times, including the scattering of the Jewish people, the rise of communism, and the increase in wickedness, and encourages listeners to be prepared for Christ's return.

Duration: 49:37

Scripture: Matthew 24:12-13, Matthew 25:1-13, Mark 13:10, John 8:12, Ephesians 5:16, Revelation 22:20

Topics: "Second Coming", "Spiritual Readiness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the theme of 'What time is it?' referring to the position of the Son of Righteousness according to God's clock. He mentions that there are signs indicating that it is very late, possibly minutes before midnight. The preacher references the parable of the virgins, where five were wise and five were foolish, emphasizing the need to be prepared for the coming of the bridegroom. He also highlights the importance of preaching the gospel to every creature and the need for Christians to watch and pray, as we do not know the hour of the Lord's coming. The preacher encourages believers to abide in Him so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed.

Transcript

Now may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. This afternoon I wish to consider with my brethren a theme that here before, Brother Ehlert says I've been coming for nine years, I have never touched upon. I'm going to give the theme, the title, What Time Is It? Of course I do not refer to your watch or to mine, nor to an astronomic measure of time, but rather the position of the sun of righteousness.

In other words, what time is it by God's clock? There are many signs which seem to indicate that it's very late. It could be even minutes before midnight. We have just heard the Savior's voice speaking through the Word as it was read in the parable, the parable of the Virgin, five of which were wise and five of which were foolish, foolish because oil was lacking in their land.

And the Savior said, At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh. Go ye out to meet him. At midnight.

I have read that there is a clock, it's just an artificial wooden affair it seems to me, it doesn't move, before one of the centers of nuclear experiments, atomic, in these different centers that the government has. I say I've read of a clock which is marking it has been now for some time. The hands do not move.

Only a few minutes to midnight. So it would seem that even men out there in the world, men of science, not speaking from convictions, Christian convictions, but simply from signs drawn from science, feel that it's very late in the history of mankind. Now the Savior bade his own and through the Word bidst us all watch and pray.

For we know not in what hour our Lord may come. You will recall the words in John's first epistle, the second chapter, where in the closing verse we read, And now little children abide in him that when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming. I've been reading of late that perhaps the better word, and it's a biblical word, is appearing.

Paul uses it, you will recall, in the second epistle to Timothy where he speaks of how he was coming to the close of the race, having fought a good fight and kept the faith, saying that there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness which would be given to all, not only to him but all who loved the Savior, appearing. Appearing because, well, he's not coming from afar, he's here. He's here, but he will appear in majesty and glory.

Yes, coming in the clouds. He will appear, he who is here, in spirit, the head of the church, as we have it in the book of Revelation, on that white charger, his garments dipped in blood, marching at the head of the armies of the Rupees. Now this afternoon, and I do pray that the Lord would keep me from any extravagant expression beyond what we have in the word.

I say, let us this afternoon think about some of the signs. And the Savior, you will recall, pointed to certain signs at the close of the age, prior to his appearance. And you will recall how he chided the Jews because they were not able to read the signs of his first advance.

Why, he said, you know when it's going to rain, and you know when it's going to be a clear day, you can read the signs in the heavens, and you cannot read the signs of this hour. So let us pause to consider some of these signs that are on the horizon. I've observed that even beyond Christian circles, people are questioning the meaning of some things that are taking place in history today.

I do not know what you would put as the foremost sign that it's very late by God's clock, but I have felt now for some years that the outstanding sign is Israel. Someone has said, a student of the Bible, that Israel is the framework of history. Well, it was an Israelite.

If I may so speak of a son of man, a son of God, God manifests in the flesh, who is the center of history. It all moved about his person. Yes, Israel is the framework of history.

And the Savior gave it out. We have it in the 22nd chapter, if you wish to look upon it as it is in your Bible, the 21st chapter of Matthew's gospel, the 24th verse, And they, the Jewish people, shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Now, the Savior was looking, we all know, to the destruction of Jerusalem. Some forty years were yet to expire before it should take place. And he seemed to look through the destruction of Jerusalem, the great tribulation, I say great, not the great tribulation, but the great tribulation of the chosen people.

He seemed to be looking through the destruction of Jerusalem to that great tribulation. And you know, as you read Matthew 24 at times, it's difficult to know, is he referring to the destruction of Jerusalem or is he referring to the great tribulation? They seem to blend. But I heard a very lovely illustration of that from the

lips of one of our Mexican teachers years ago.

He said, when you look out you can't tell here, but down in Mexico you surely can. Upon the mountains, you will see a mountain there, and it seems to be in the same position as one at its side. But when you get to that mountain, you'll find the other one far away.

And so these events seem to be side by side. But the Savior was looking through the destruction of Jerusalem. Oh, the anguish of the chosen people in that hour.

Never was there such sorrow. Ah, Josephus describes it all, that Jewish historian, extra-biblical. Why, he said, so great was the hunger within Jerusalem that refused to surrender to Titus, the Roman general that the high priest's daughter was found digging around in refuse camel dung for a bit of corn.

Then when Jerusalem fell, not a stone was left, even as the Savior said, one upon another. And this people, ah, they had brought this judgment upon themselves at the foot of the cross. They had cried His blood be upon us and upon our children.

We have no king but Caesar. I say, then it was that judgment fell. Oh, the Savior had wept over Jerusalem.

How often would I have gathered you even as a hen, her chicks, but you would not. And so this prophecy was fulfilled. Josephus tells us the Jews were scattered over the face of the earth and sold into slavery.

You could have bought a Jew for ten cents, and they'd been there for twenty centuries. There's no city of importance in the world that does not have its ghetto. I had the privilege of preaching to a colony of Jews, converted, praise God, down in Buenos Aires two years ago.

Some were being drawn to the Lord. There they are. Twenty centuries.

Now, who would have dreamed? According to national law, utterly out of the question. Let us look upon it in other terms. Presuming that Colombia is at war with Venezuela.

Colombia falls. Soldiers from Venezuela come into the capital. They do not leave a stone upon a stone.

And the Colombians are scattered over the face of the earth. To return, to build their capital, and to form a nation again after twenty centuries? No. No Colombians.

They would, already in the first century, melt away into a union with other people. Even as our dear young people, Mexicans, who live on the side of the border, become, and are American citizens, enter the army later on, their children. It will be an utter and an absolute identification, their children's children, with the life of the USA.

Not so with the Jewish people. No. They are still identified after twenty centuries.

And there's no melting into a unity with other cultures. It began, you know, back there in the days of World War II. Or World War I. When Allenby came up from Egypt.

In those days, Turkey stood united, am I not right about this, with Germany? Yes. In World War II, no. When Allenby came to the walls of Jerusalem, I remember how it came out in life, pictures of Allenby at the gates of Jerusalem.

Then he trembled. He was a Christian man. And he said, how am I going to bomb the Holy City? His duty as a soldier, and his convictions as a soldier of the cross, in conflict.

And he called fellow officers. He stated the problem. Will you pray with me? Yes, General.

And there General Allenby in his tent, surrounded by his officers. No doubt upon their knees, calling upon the Lord. And the next day, a civilian marched out of Jerusalem with a white flag.

And the city was turned over, surrendered to the British General, without a shot fired. That was a critical moment in the history of the world, for things were beginning to change for Israel. And fall into this divine pattern again.

For some time, you will recall, a British mandate. And then when World War II came, ah, this infuriated beast, demon-possessed without a doubt, who so hated the Jewish people. Five million exterminated in gas chambers in their bodies for the soil to enrich it.

They fled. Oh, I was on board a ship coming from Europe. I recall the conversation with this Jewish woman.

My boy is going to the Holy Land. I'm going to the States. They fled in all directions.

And I still recall when that ship came to the coast of Mexico, Heracruz, and was recused at Mitten, filled with Jews. And so it was, as the ship went from port to port, all right, we'll go to the Holy Land. And the ship entered the Mediterranean, and these Jews even there had to cast themselves into the waters, even as Paul, on that occasion.

And they came to the shores of Palestine, and you know the rest, how they fought it out with the Arabs. Now this that the Savior says here has been fulfilled. Jerusalem is no longer trodden underfoot.

Do we understand? Israel, Jerusalem shall be trodden underfoot. Israel is a nation, until, well, there is Israel again a nation, brethren, again a nation. The flag again unfurled.

Israel's flag over Jerusalem. Israel forming part, a part of the United Nations. Israel after 20 centuries, a nation.

Now if that doesn't speak to your heart, it's because you're just determined not to listen. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Perhaps we're living in a plus of God's mercy. Just an added period of grace for the times of the Gentiles, it would appear, are fulfilled. For Israel again is a nation.

Jerusalem. Some have said, well, the reason this is not altogether fulfilled, the reason why the times of the Gentiles have not fully run out, there's still a little sand in the sundial, or is it better called the sand dial, there's still a little sand that hasn't run out. Because Jerusalem is not yet fully under Jewish control, under the flag of Israel.

And then friends, let us turn for a moment to another sign. Oh, it's so very, very clear today. It was strange that the Savior should have spoken as he did, you know.

He said two things apparently contradictory. He said the gospel would be preached in all the world, didn't he? And it has been preached in all the world. And then he said, well, you think the gospel would bring better times.

But he didn't say that. On the contrary. Yes, the gospel would be preached in all the world, but men's hearts would be failing them for fear of the things, for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.

Times of great iniquity and wickedness and sin. I say apparently contradictory, but the Savior in his great wisdom simply was stating a fact which history in its unfolding now verifies the gospel has been preached in all the world, and at the same time there's been a growing wickedness. And today men's hearts are failing them for fear.

And never before in history, you don't feel it so much here in the valley. Those of us that live in the capitals. Ah, we feel it in Mexico City, the capital.

Because, of course, the great spy centers are in the capitals. There's where the tensions are. And every day it comes out in the daily papers that it could be.

We do not know that we are on the verge of World War III. We all know that our dear native land, that Uncle Sam is in a very dire predicament right now. If he does go forward with this thing in Vietnam, and begins to strike at the sources of power, communists, as he feels that he must, it could bring on, we think, Russia's bluffing, but we don't know.

And China, it could bring on a veritable Armageddon. But if the USA backs out, well, Frank, you know how aggressive communism is today. It'll be even more.

Ah, yesterday there was a plan to blow up the Statue of Liberty, and I don't know how many other centers of American government. What will it be tomorrow if Uncle Sam backs out? So it's a very critical. In the history of the world, it came out in the English-speaking paper in Mexico City the day before I left, 120 million will die in a day.

Should it come to pass, men's hearts are failing them for fear today. And science has brought it upon us, brethren, for men have gone forward with a tremendous passion and regard science, but where are we? Men's hearts failing them for fear. And yet, of course, the savior to his own says, fear not.

Little flock, it is the father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. And he was forever saying to his own, fear not. When that storm came on the sea, and the savior appeared walking to his disciples on the water, well, they were greatly troubled and cried out for fear.

He says, it is I, be not afraid. And he's saying the same to us today. When you see these things, lift up your heads for your redemption draws nigh.

Hey, you see how the savior interprets it? In terms of glory. Lift up your heads when you see these things coming to pass for your redemption draws nigh. In a sense, our redemption is still in swaddling clothes, friends.

Praise God, forgiven, justified, sanctified, members of the body of Christ, but still in swaddling clothes because we do not yet have our resurrection bodies. That, when the appearing of Jesus our Lord, as we

have it in the third chapter of the epistle to the Philippians, our conversation is in heaven, verse 20 and 21, from whence also we look for the savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. That's why it's a blessed fold.

Yes, friends, our redemption's still in swaddling clothes. For we shall have resurrection bodies, as it reads here, like unto his, the savior's glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. Yes, he will have the last word.

All things subdued unto himself. And then we have it here, I think it's in the 24th chapter of Matthew, that there will be a great increase of iniquity. Here's where I was saying a moment ago it would appear to be contradictory.

If the gospel is to be preached in all the world, then surely peace and righteousness. But no, the savior knew best. He knew that right along this same line there would be a parallel line of iniquity, that the enemy, knowing when his time was drawing short to the end, would come with great wrath.

We find it in verse 12. And because iniquity shall abound, for in 21, then shall there be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.

But for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened. Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall go wax cold. Now, I don't have to really say much at this point.

I can leave it with your own conscience. You read the paper, you know. We're hearing it on all sides, that there seems to be a flood of demon activity upon the life of the world.

Iniquity such as had never been known yesterday. When I say yesterday, well, when Brother Ehlers and I were young. Why, you expected these things from, we call them ampones in the Spanish.

Ampones are these thugs of the underworld. What do you call them? Poodlums of the underworld. But today, it's our children, brethren.

Today, it's the youth of the land of the world. And governments don't know what to do about it. And there's nothing they can do about it, because parents are the only ones that can do anything about this.

And they're off in their clubs, and they're off in their whiskey parties. And the strangest things taking place in the life of youth. It seems to be a madness, a hysteria.

Yes, wickedness is abounding. I've stated, and I don't think it's an exaggeration, that the kind of wickedness that you have in communism. Well, friends, the wickedness of former days is child's play.

Ah, this taking men and brainwashing them to turn them inside out and make them what they never intended to be on the basis of torture, psychological torture. And we know that this isn't talk. I was reading some time back a book by one Whiskade from Czechoslovakia, now in one of the south lands, New Zealand, where the book was written.

And he states that when he was taken prisoner, lying up there in the prison compound with hundreds of others, he said it was for but one reason, his faith. Ah, friends, their final goal is the strike of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he said when the chief of the prison went up and down observing everyone and studying everyone, he said, when he came to me, this man's Christianity must have revealed itself.

Ah, you're a nice boy, aren't you? And he said as he fell, he said to himself, very well, I'm thankful for this blow. I'll never give in to these folks, come what may. Many others in the prison, he said, went down, couldn't take it.

But he held out. And when the day of examination came and he was to answer their questions, he said, I gave them Christian answers for every question, and they threw me into a dungeon with rats. But working later as a slave on the highways of the land, he was able to escape to a woods and traveling by night, he finally reached the Austrian border and came to freedom.

Well, my dear brethren, oh, that that's only one among ten thousand stories of a similar nature, brethren, there it is. We draw aside the veil but a bit and look into this thing, friends, it's the wickedest. Thing in the history of the world, we know that.

Because it's based on the ground of atheism and it's out against the church. Not only the church, but we know religion. And then just one other point.

I don't want to dwell too fully on this point, but I do believe we're feeling it today. The Savior said there would arise false Christ. If any man shall say unto you, lo, here is Christ, or, lo, there, believe it not.

Don't be gullible. There shall arise false Christ and false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect. Well, it's going on every day, multiplying false Christ.

How we're feeling it in mission land. One day down in Paraguay, I was at a great Christian school just across the street. I said, what's that? Oh, he said, it's a great, quite a Russellite center here.

They're all over the world. Only a year ago, a year and a half over in Uruguay, we were talking, my companion and I, to the wife of a missionary. She said, I've wept till I can weep no more.

Her husband, a Methodist missionary, had taken up Mormonism, spreading all over the earth this false, this wicked thing. Rosicrucianism. Those of us in the mission field, well, we've hardly made a convert.

Oh, what you're reading? Oh, this is Rosicrucian. That the Savior should have gone to India to study. As I say, I really hesitate to touch on this aspect of the matter.

But here it is in the word, there shall arise false Christ. Oh, the doctrines of demons. And the worst of it is, you know, he always goes with his Bible.

Oh, of course, even the Mormon. But if you nibble a bit, you know, he sees if you're nibbling, well then, the Book of Mormon said there are two Bibles, you see. And it won't be long if you keep on nibbling before the Bible is laid aside with the Book of Mormon.

Oh yes, friends, we're living in perilous times. The doctrines of demons are abroad today. And they come with the Bible.

But you know, Scripture tells us that Satan transformed himself into an angel of light. How did he come to the Savior? Oh, he had to come to the Savior in the subtlest possible manner. Refined to the nth degree.

And so he comes with the Bible. And he says, Lord, it's written. It's written, Lord.

And he cites a verse in Psalm 91. But you know, when the Bible is opened by Satan, he'll give you half truth. Now, that verse is true.

There, that the enemy gave to the Redeemer in the desert, it's in the Bible, Psalm 91. But it's got to be balanced up with other truths that are also in the Bible. Else you fall into the enemy's net.

He's not such a fool. He knows that to deceive the saints, he must come with the Bible. Twisting, getting great truths out of proper proportion with other truths that balance, that affect these first truths.

Above all, my dear brethren, his great strategy is to get you off center. The center is, as we heard in the song, praise God for that song, the old rugged cross. The center is Christ Jesus, the Lord, the crucified, the crucified risen Lord.

Here's your center. Now, if the enemy can get you just a bit off center, well, he'll come with more and he'll press you harder to get you even more off center. For we are only safe, brethren, hidden in the wounded side of the crucified risen Lord.

You've got to stand where Paul stood, if you would be safe today, when he said, I am crucified together with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me. Now, these are not all the signs, but I would not weary you.

It is seen to me that there's a new sign on the horizon. I would not press this too much, but the Savior did say that there would be signs in the heavens. Well, we've moved into a new age.

Americans are all aghast because that Saturn, or I've forgotten the name, reached the moon, and the pictures have been television, televised, home. We've moved into a new age. We're all looking up at the wonders that are taking place in the sky, and the Savior said there's another sign.

Now, there are those who feel that it cuts the nerve of evangelism. Not at all, brethren. On the contrary, it would hasten properly, viewed and properly understood, it hasten.

The time is short. We must buy up the time we still have and go forth into all the world. All the world, preaching the gospel to every creature, for there's but one hope today, friends.

There's but one star shining in the night of the world's wickedness, and that's the star of Bethlehem. Only one. Praise God for His light, that Jesus, our Lord, the light of the world, is coming again.

And really, brethren, we ought to be on tiptoe. I used to always think about it when we would get home in those days when we had our little dog, Honey. Well, we lost Honey.

It was a great trial for the family. Honey would be at the gate, and Honey would be there, brethren, hardly breathing, until we appeared. And then you never saw such joy.

You never saw such capers and such carrying on. The Master had come. Well, that's the way it ought to be with us.

John cried out, saying, Come, Lord Jesus. The answer was, I come quick. Behold, let us pray.

O gracious Father, we're so thankful for that star that's shining in the darkness of the world's life today, so wicked, the star of Bethlehem. Oh, a symbol, the star of Bethlehem, of that blessed one, the Son of

Righteousness. And, Father, we're so thankful that the Son will appear afresh in all of its glory, and the Savior will carry His wondrous work to a glorious consummation for all eternity.

Oh, may we not be as the unwise virgins who had no oil in their lamps, Father. But may we be watching, even as the Savior said, Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Watch, will you not, in what hour your Lord may come.

He will come in such an hour as you think not. Father, hear our prayer. And forgive us our coldness, Lord.

We have not panted after Thy coming. We have not cried with John of old. Come, Lord Jesus, and stir us up, Father, that we may buy up the time that still remains for the spread of the gospel to all peoples of the earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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