

Expository Thoughts On Mark - Mark 13:14-23

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

We are taught in these verses the lawfulness of using means to provide for our own personal safety. The language of our Lord Jesus Christ on the subject is clear and unmistakable--"Let those who be in Judea FLEE to the mountains--let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house--let him that is in the field not turn back again--pray you that your flight be not in the winter." Not a word is said to make us suppose that flight from danger, in certain circumstances, is unworthy of a Christian. As to the time prophesied of in the passage before us, men may differ widely. But as to the lawfulness of taking measures to avoid peril, the teaching of the passage is plain.

The lesson is one of wide application, and of much usefulness. A Christian is not to neglect the use of means, because he is a Christian, in the things of this life, any more than in the things of the life to come. A believer is not to suppose that God will take care of him, and provide for his needs, if he does not make use of means and the common sense which God has given him, as well as other people. Beyond doubt he may expect the special help of his Father in heaven, in every time of need. But he must expect it in the diligent use of lawful means. To profess to trust God, while we idly sit still and do nothing, is nothing better than fanaticism, and brings religion into contempt.

The word of God contains several instructive examples on this subject, to which we shall do well to take heed. The conduct of Jacob, when he went to meet his brother Esau, is a striking case in point. He first prays a most touching prayer, and then sends his brother a carefully arranged present. (Gen. 32:9-13.) The conduct of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib came against Jerusalem, is another case. "With us," he tells the people, "is the Lord our God, to fight our battles." And yet, at the same time, he built up the walls of the city, and made darts and shields. (2 Chron. 32:5.) The conduct of Paul is another case. Frequently we read of his fleeing from one place to another, to preserve life. Once we see him let down from the walls of Damascus by a basket. Once we hear him telling the soldiers on board the Alexandrian ship, "Except the shipmen abide in the ship, you cannot be saved." (Acts 27:31.) We know the great apostle\

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