

Concerning the End Part One

by Richard E. Bieber

Jesus teaches us to stay focused on Him, be aware of false prophets and calamities, and stay ready for His return.

Scripture: Matthew 24:4-45

Topics: "End Times", "Spiritual Vigilance"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the importance of staying vigilant and focused on Jesus amidst the chaos and deceptions of the end times, as outlined in Jesus' discourse in Matthew 24 and 25. He emphasizes the need to guard against religious delusion and false prophets who may lead believers astray, urging them to keep their hearts fixed on Christ. Bieber highlights the significance of continuing to preach the Word, fleeing from Satan's rebellion, being observant of the signs of Christ's return, and staying awake and ready for His coming by faithfully doing the work the Lord has assigned.

Transcript

Read Matthew 24

Jesus' discourse in Matthew 24 and 25 is the most comprehensive of any in scripture - His return to this earth at the close of the age. The reason these teachings are preserved is doubtless because they are meant for the whole church of all time.

Down through the centuries these teachings of Jesus have been helpful for those saints who have had to live through one of the periodic convulsions which have seized the earth as it groans and travails, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. But never at any period in history has the Spirit of God stirred the minds of believers more urgently to learn the lessons Jesus teaches us in Matthew 24 and 25 than now.

Jesus did not draw a diagram and say,

"This is how it's going to happen."

If He had, then we'd all be looking at that diagram instead of at Him as the crisis unfolds. He tells us just enough about the chaotic things that will be going on that we won't be thrown by them when they come. The central message of this entire discourse is,

"Keep your hearts fixed on Me and don't let yourselves be distracted by anything".

The disciples want information -

"Tell us when will this be and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age."

Jesus answers, not with information, but with a series of commands which are infinitely more important than any information He might sprinkle in.

1. Jesus answers:

"Take heed that no one leads you astray."

- He's not talking about being led astray into gross sin.
- He's not talking about being led astray by dealers and pimps and loose women.
- He's talking about being led astray into religious delusion.

"For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ', and they will lead many astray."

They will come in Jesus' Name.

Outwardly they will seem to be Christians, but they will usurp Jesus' authority to themselves. They will subtly, beneath the garb of servant-hood and humility, play the Messiah role. They will draw men to themselves instead of to Jesus.

Never has there been more of this kind of deception than there is now.

"Take heed".

Jesus makes clear that if we are not wary in this area, if we're wide open to every man or woman who claims to be a prophet, there is a good chance that we will be led astray from the Cross and blood and righteousness of the True Christ!

"And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray."

There is only one Christ who has the nail prints in his hands and feet, and whose breath is the resurrection Spirit of God. Any man who claims to have the authority of Christ, but lacks the marks of that Cross in his message and walk, beware of him!

2. Do not let calamities keep you from preaching the Word.

And Jesus tells us what calamities we can expect.

Wars,

rumors of wars,

famine,

earthquake,

persecution,

death for the name of Jesus,

hatred by all nations for His Name's sake.

We get thrilled when we read of these things. But when they start to happen to us it won't be thrilling - it will be alarming.

"What happened to God?

Why is He letting this go on?"

"And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed. For this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All this is but the beginning of the sufferings. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death; and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.....

And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come."

Keep on proclaiming the gospel even if the sky is falling in.

3. Flee as fast and as far as you can from Satan's open rebellion against God.

Don't stand around and watch.

"So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing in the holy place, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let him who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, let him who in the field not turn back to take his mantle."

Flee!

There will indeed be a supreme, horrible, open defiance of God by Satan and his kingdom. It will doubtless happen in Jerusalem. And it will usher in the most severe time of tribulation the world has ever seen. The saints who are there will know to flee.

But this applies to every other brazen, naked, blasphemy Satan contrives. Hence, we stay away from witchcraft, spiritualism, or any other form of Satanic defiance. We don't even go near it!

The angels were not standing around watching when Jesus went through His temptation. Only after the victory were they sent into the wilderness to minister to Jesus. Some of us are much too fascinated by evil. We like to watch. Don't!

4. You won't have to run around trying to find the returned Christ. He will find you! Stay where you are!

- You won't have to take a jet to India.

- You won't have to run to some secret meeting in New York.

"So if they say to you, 'Lo, he is in the wilderness', do not go out; if they say, 'Lo, he is in the inner rooms', do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the

coming of the Son of Man. Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

- He'll find you.

- Wherever you are, He will find you!

5. Observe the signs God gives you.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn.....

From the fig tree, learn its lesson. As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that He is near, at the very gates."

Don't be blind to the signs. Look at them and read their meaning. God will help you to understand.

6. Stay awake! Be ready.

"But of that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.....

Watch, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming."

- If I'm spiritually asleep when He comes,

- if I'm off getting oil for my lamp,

- I'll be left behind.

We are to have our eyes on heaven,

our hearts on the Cross,

and our hands loosely holding the things of earth.

7. Keep doing the work the Lord gave you to do until He comes. Don't get sloppy.

Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing.

- We don't go up on the mountaintop, put on our white robes, and wait.

- We don't sit around in endless meditation.

- We don't become lax.

- We fill every day with obedient, joyful, diligent labor.

Jesus gave you work to do. Do that work until He moves you to another job, or until He comes in glory. And do it right.

- Don't be beating your fellow servants.
- Don't eat and drink with the drunken.
- Look after that house.
- Feed those sheep.
- Water and cultivate those crops.
- Bring in those sheaves.

And don't say, "Well, I only have three more years of this." You don't know that. You may have much longer, or He may come sooner than you think. Just let each day you live be filled with work to His praise until He comes.

The message of the Spirit across the earth at this hour is:

"The time of the gentiles is over. The Messiah is coming soon."

- Those who take it all quite calmly because they're so sure they have the answers, can go on sleeping.
- Those who don't buy this message because it's an offense to their great minds, can go on thinking their own thoughts.

Meanwhile, God is raising up a people who will listen.

If we'll listen, He will teach us all we still need to know to survive the things that are coming.

God help us to listen!

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