

April 19, 2020

- “Matthew 24:1-8 -

“Take Heart, the End is not yet”

Introduction:

Many secular prophets prophesied that we would not last as a civilization past the year 2000. We all remember the Y2K scare. In fact many had the world coming to an end along with computers meltdowns and nuclear destruction. Next, it was 2012 because the Mayan calendar predicted an event of cataclysmic proportions. Now we have soothsayers and false prophets declaring the covid-19 pandemic is the end of the world. In fact the anxiety and confusion has folks asking, “Is this a sign of the end times, is the world ending? If history teaches us anything, it's that humans have a proclivity for anticipating the End Times.

I will say this about the virus, it is dreadful, and it is heinous and it is pestilence. A pestilence that does not discriminate. It does not matter who you are or how much money you have or if you belong to a Royal family. This virus has infected Boris Johnson, Queen Elizabeth son, Prince Charles. Film star Tom Hanks and his wife, George Stephanopoulos, Kevin Durant of the Brooklyn Nets and many others player have been diagnosed with the coronavirus. So this is a pestilence that has infected 183 countries and people. I am sorry to say, this will not be the last one either. I know because Jesus said so. I believe what Jesus said and look to what He foretold and take confidences in that. Jesus said, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me”. – (John 14:1) So, let see what Jesus said about this in today’s sermon and I hope you have a bible handy as we do. Is this covid-19 pandemic the end? First, Jesus gave us some general features that take place ...

I. Before the End Comes. (Matthew 24:1-7)

1. I want us to look at the background where and when Jesus spoke to His disciples about the end times. They were showing Jesus some of the impressive Temple buildings in Jerusalem. Many of these were build and rebuild by Herod the Great. Then the Lord makes a fantasizing statement, “Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.

So, we can establish he is speaking to Jews about the future of the Jewish people. He is in Jerusalem and more precisely Jesus is sitting upon the Mount of Olives; therefore this prophetic passage has come to be known as the Olivet Discourse.

Jesus is speaking of a future event that happened in 70 AD. History tells us that General Titus of the Roman army sacked the city and burned it. Josephus, the Jewish historian claims that 1.1 million people were killed during the siege, of which a majority was Jewish and he attributes this to the celebration of Passover. Titus gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and Temple, whereby the Roman soldiers did not leave a stone upon a stone as they plunder the gold from the temple walls and stones.

That now brings us to verse three, let’s say you are a Jew, Jesus is predicting what shall happen to the nation and its people and it holiest temple. We know it happens in 70 AD, but they don’t. So, they are very curious and ask Him, “Tell us, when shall these things be? and

what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? Jesus begins to answer them in verse 4-7.

The Lord tells them that in the last days there will be more and more false teachers. Don't be deceived! These false teachers will propagate their own version of the truth rather than the truth as revealed in Christ. Taking advantage of people they will use their teachings to control others and to enrich themselves. They will claim to be the messiah. Jewish history is inundated with them.

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We move to verse six and he says, "**And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.**"

There have been more than 15,000 wars recorded in human history. Jesus said this was going to happen, but not to be alarmed because, "Such things must happen". Jesus tells them and us **that this is not the end!** Nations shall rise up against nation. There shall be famines and yes we have seen famines, he said there will be earthquakes.

There have been catastrophic earthquakes, over the last several years and they have increased in numbers and intensity as have storms, hurricanes and tornado. Jesus Christ foretold us nearly 2000 years ago that in the latter days there would be earthquakes in many places. Scientist agreed that since 1950 there is notable documentation proving the proliferation of earthquakes in these last decades. Mark 13 Jesus compared this proliferation like birth pangs.

II. No Date when the End Comes . Matthew 24:7- 8; 36

1. Jesus tells us that in this time period there will be pestilences note that this is plural. The word pestilence literally means a plague or disease. That is what covid-19 is, a pestilence, a disease and it is most likely not the last either because these continue until the end. Again, Jesus stated these things will happen but the end is not yet. Take heart, the end is not yet.

2. However, in verse 8 he does describe this time period as the beginning of sorrows. Our nation and the world have witness so many times sorrow, decades of sorrow. Wars have brought sorrow, violent earthquakes, tsunamis, tornados, hurricanes, senseless killings in schools, theaters, workplaces, 9/11 and diseases even like we are going through right now. These all advance sorrows which we see comes just prior to the rapture of the church.

3. So where does that put us on the prophetic map? That puts us in the age of church also known as the dispensation of Grace. There are seven dispensations: 1) Innocence – Adam & Eve prior to the Fall; 2) Conscience – From the Fall to the Great Flood, 3) Human Government – after the Great Flood. 4) Promise – from Abraham to Moses. 5) The Law - from Moses to Christ, this dispensation ends with the scattering of Israel in 70 AD. Next is Grace- from the cross to the rapture of the church. The rapture is followed by God's wrath and a transitional 7 year period into the 7) Millennial Kingdom – a literal 1000 year reign of Christ on Earth. They all overlap to some degree. One of the things about dispensationalism is that it is in line with the church's hope of Christ's return. The word "dispensation" means "a system of order or organization that God-ordered and are God-ordained."

4. The tribulation will usher in this final dispensation with 4 sets of judgments; the Seal judgements, the Trumpets judgements, the Thunder judgments and the Bowl judgements and then the Coming of Christ. Matthew 24 has become known by Bible scholars as an overture of the Book of Revelation from Chapter 5- 22. It is an essential portion of scripture in relationship to end time events.

III. When does the End Comes. (Matthew 24:1-6)

1. So, knowing what we do about the Book of Revelation; it is a revealing of what happens during the End times starting again with chapter five. Most of you understand this to be called the Tribulation, a period of only seven years where God will purge the earth and bring judgement upon the nations and Satan. We know that these judgements do not happen until after verse 14 where Jesus expressly says, “And then the end shall come. These time of sorrows are proliferating the gospel and the Rapture will bring great revival.

2. Last, verse 15 Jesus clearly states when the end come; right after Daniel prophecies come to past. The time of Jacob trouble God finishes His promises to the Jewish people. So give us a date. I can’t because the book of Matthew in 24:36 state, **“But of that day and [that] hour knoweth no man...** Jesus claimed that this knowledge was reserved for His Father only. If Jesus Himself – at least during His earthly ministry – did not know this day and hour, it emphasizes the foolishness of any person then or now making predictions regarding the prophetic timetable.

3. However, as we close this message we do know according to scriptures the next event is the Rapture. Before He establishes His kingdom on earth, Jesus will come for His Church, an event commonly referred to as the "Rapture. That is the rapture of the bride of Jesus Christ. It is the last trumpet sounding. Paul explains the features of the Rapture. The bride “shall be caught up,” it is the term **hār-pä'-zō** from which we get the concept of Rapture. In I Corinthians 15:52 again the mention of the Rapture... **In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.**

4. Therefore folks, coved-19 is not a sign of the rapture. It is imminent. Yet, the shadows of future events cast itself ahead of time, even though those events have not yet transpired. And even though the rapture of the church is the next event on the prophetic calendar we would expect things to be falling in place. Thus, we might anticipate a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, an alignment of the ten nations, movements toward a one-world church and government.

At the same time, we must be very careful not to say that the events we see shaping up before our eyes are necessarily a fulfillment of prophecy, for history has taught us to be cautious about such early predictions. The Lord may well wait another millennium before returning.

Conclusion

Jesus said in John 16:33 that we’re going to have trouble. That’s just part of life, and the extent of that trouble will vary. Difficulty is part of our human existence. However, in the same verse that Jesus warns us we’re going to have trouble, He tells us to “take heart...”

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33).