

Signs of the End of the Age Nature in Revolt

Studio Session 86

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About the signs of the return of the Lord, **Matthew**, **Mark** and **Luke** have given us a list of things that will occur at the return of the Lord. The first is the rise of false Christs... if you like, a spirit of anti-Christ. The second is war, the third are famines, the fourth are earthquakes, the fifth are pestilences and the sixth, the roaring and tossing of the sea. That one [the tossing of the sea] we get as a specific reference from **Luke 21:25**. The references from which we are working are **Matthew 24**, beginning at **verse 1** and then **Mark 13**, pretty much the same, beginning at **verse 1**; and then **Luke 21**.

Now it has often been said that these signs have all occurred before, since the days of John in the first century there have been false Messiahs. In fact prior to John and prior even to the coming of the Lord, prior to even the revelation of the Lord, there were those who held themselves out to be Messiahs. So this spirit of anti-Christ has been around at least since the first century but I know we can properly locate the spirit that opposes God as a spirit of religion from the very beginning with Cain and Abel. It has been specifically identified in the New Testament by John and his writings in **1 stand 2 nd John** as the spirit of anti-Christ.

And there have been wars and there have been earthquakes in various places. There was the Black Plague in the Middle Ages, there have been famines in ancient times and in recent times and there have been tidal waves and the destruction of coastal cities and towns noted in history. So why would Jesus identify these signs as indicating his return? Well the answer of course is first that these were not meant to be original signs so that we would know what they were but secondly, when He gave us the explanation of a woman in childbirth He gave us the way that these signs would string together. A woman who is giving birth goes through a series of contractions and the rhythm of these contractions is what He is using.

So at the same time that you have these various signs working together, converging together and moving from one to another while the one is still going on... that's the sign of the times. It is the rhythm of childbirth that strings these signs together so it means that they will not be isolated incidences historically as they have been... distinct

incidences, like you have had the Black Plague and you have had war and you have had the destruction of coastal villages and towns by tidal waves and so on. You have had these as separate things in human history and the fact is that until the modern means of reporting things, one nation was not concerned about the events going on and affecting another nation. For example, European nations would not even know about the events that would, say, affect Asian nations. But in this present climate the whole world is affected by every one of these events and that is as Jesus intended, but there are aspects to these signs that are unique.

These signs were introduced earlier on in various nations, but now their impacts are very distinct and often global. Let me explain. In the first of these signs on the earth below Jesus speaks of a change in the spiritual climate. He speaks of the rise of a false Christ. Well using the term “Christ,” one would assume that the issue would be of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus on the cross, but not so. A false Christ is one who doesn’t preach that gospel but preaches another gospel; the kind that Paul said in Galatians would cause both the one speaking these things and those who hear it to be accursed. (Inserted – actual verse—**“But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!” – Galatians 1:8**)

Throughout the Scriptures, one of the signs of the end of the Age is the rising of false teachers. The Scriptures say that men will not endure the soundness of the truth, but having itching ears they will heap to themselves teachers for whatever they lust for and they will turn from what is true and they will turn to fables. (Inserted – actual verse—**“For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.” – II Timothy 4:3,4**)

In our country we have noted that after the events of September 11, 2001, that officially we began to note the nation shifting toward an ecumenism, for political reasons. We had the highest official in the land declaring that a religion other than the Christian faith is a “good” religion. We had, at the National Cathedral, a parade of luminaries representing all other kinds of religions meeting together to declare brotherhood and humanity. Of course we understand why: mankind is scared. There are 1.2 billion Hindus in the world who do not believe in Jesus as the Son of God. There are close to 1 billion (some estimates say as high as 1.3 billion) Muslims in the world who do not believe in Jesus as the only way to God. There are Buddhists who clearly do not accept Jesus as the exclusive way to God. In our country there are New Agers who represent a conglomerate of ideas and they surely do not accept Jesus as the Son of God. So around the world we have a political time bomb as it were, because religious factions are at odds with each other and are willing to engage in indiscriminate slaughter of the populations for religious

reasons.

What then is a useful theology? Clearly it would be the theology of “peace,” would it not? And the usefulness of it would be that we are all brothers. We must do away with Jesus because He is the One who insists that no man comes to the Father except by him and if we all subscribe to our own unique description as Father, if Jesus insists that He is the only begotten of the Father then we have a problem with Jesus. Jesus has created this stumbling block. Perhaps it was this that He had in mind when He said, “And you will be hated by all the nations because of me.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.” – Matthew 10:22**)

Today, in this nation that had long been regarded as a Christian nation, it is no longer true that Jesus is officially received as the only way to the Father. Jesus is still the only way to the Father; it is just that He is out of favor with the politics of the nation. Now this is true whether we like to hear it or not. What has been sacrificed in this theology of brotherhood is the uniqueness of the “place” of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has now been relegated to “a good man, a prophet, one who had insights.” And He is quoted, in support oddly enough, of a kind of global theology that at the core, fundamentally offends who He is and what He came to say and although at the moment Christians seem to have a disproportionate influence over the government of this country, Christians do not typically have a disproportionate influence over the governments of nations and when—*when*, not if, but when—that influence is lost here in this nation we will begin to see a radical re-thinking of the role of Christians in society.

Christianity—true Christianity—is on its way to becoming a hated religion, so Christianity itself will split. It will split between those who desire the convenience and the approval of the state and the populations of the world as a whole. So you will find a split in Christianity where the majority of those presently claiming to be Christians will favor a theology that moves away from Christ being the exclusive way to God. In fact that is already happening and He is being criticized by the learned ones who use higher criticism to examine his teachings and to mix and match, to pick the things that they want out of his teachings and to reject the things that they do not want. This is what the Bible describes as the spirit of anti-Christ because Jesus is either who He says He is or He is a fraud and a liar. He is a deceiver or He is the Son of God. It is not one or the other; that is the clarity of it.

We live in a time when men do not like clarity; they love ambiguity because they can interpret ambiguity to suit themselves but Jesus did say that this period preceding His return will be characterized by the rise of doctrines that oppose him as the center and many will come presenting a different Christ using the same term, “Christ,” but presenting a very different view. I would suggest to you that this is already true

worldwide and here in the United States, as the bastion of what used to be a Christian nation, that foundational principle has already changed. And you will see from the pulpits—you will increasingly see from the pulpits—dissembling on the question of the exclusivity of Christ as the way to the Father. We are already seeing—and this isn't just what the historic church will do and is doing—popular evangelical preachers who want to maintain their popularities, creatures of the media who perfectly understand that the media makes or breaks you, will play this game of dissembling and subterfuge and will not stand for the truth that Jesus is the only way to the Father. They—in that sense whereas they themselves will not endorse openly the spirit of anti-Christ—they will permit it by their silence. But we are already there. This is just the trend that will unfold because we are already at the point of the beginnings of sorrows.

The next thing that Jesus said in these signs that are observable on the earth, the next thing He said that will happen is that there will be wars and rumors of wars. But He said, “Don't be alarmed, these things must happen, but the end is not yet.” Then He describes the kind of wars that we will see. He says, “Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” – Matthew 24:6,7a**)

Now historically wars have been typically fought for economic reasons—for reasons of trade, the acquisition of territory, the subjugation of nations—sometimes to be used as slaves, sometimes just to pay tribute to a greater nation. Rarely have the wars in human history been about tribe against tribe for the simple reason of one tribe being different from another tribe. You'll say, “Well where did you get that?” When Jesus used the term “nation,” his word was “ethnos,” from which we get the word ethnic or race. The wars at the end of the age will be very different from the nature of war previously. Yes there have been wars in which those who aggressed and those who defended were of different races but it has not been until the last century that we have had this deliberate, persistent effort to exterminate entire populations just because of their race.

Hitler was known for this but he is by no means unique. Well into the twentieth century, indeed at the close of the twentieth century we had such horrors as the Hutus and the Tutsis fighting against each other and in the space of two weeks a half million people were destroyed, and mostly in one-to-one exchanges. That is almost unimaginable bloodshed, as opposed to say a bomb, like what was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, instantly killing hundreds of thousands of people. It is as though the spirit of murder is unbridled in the world. And why should we be surprised at this? Look at all of the ways in which murder has become commonplace.

When you go to war to kill a man or a woman just because that person is of a different

race this is very different. In this kind of context the aggressor is intending to kill on the very basis of a person being of a different race as opposed to soldiers going to war with other soldiers across the faceless, nameless divides of battlefronts. A race war is where the policy is designed to exterminate a race. The foundation of that idea is the spirit of murder. We watched as the war in the Balkans unfolded with Serbs against Croats and where populations were at war exterminating another population—men, women and children—exclusively because they were of a different race. As the war in Iraq unfolds we see something else. We see the same religion but just different branches, being willing to commit these slaughters of unimaginable brutality and unconscionable mean. We see men, women and children shot and killed. Why? Because they were of a different sect of the same religion.

Today, if you were to visit the Middle East, the Middle Eastern view of the war going on in the Middle East—both in Afghanistan and Iraq—their view is totally different from the view in the West. In the West we think in terms of regime changes and the consequences to the West, if such things as the supply of oil is disrupted and so on. We think also of the politics of the Middle East and how failure to act in a timely way may endanger, to the point of serious military involvement, nations with whom we are allied such as Israel. But from overseas, from over there, they don't see it that way. They see that Christian armies have come into their countries to fight against Muslims.

For them this is the history of the Crusades and even before that the engagements of the armies of Islam to take territory—first the Western Roman Empire and then the Eastern Roman Empire—and to spread the theology of Islam, to subjugate the populations of Africa and the Middle East and northern Europe to Islam, and then the resulting crusades to retake that land. They see this as the ebb and flow of history but they see it as principally a religious war. That's why, when for example the warriors of Islam—the Mujahidin—when they see the armies of the Christians come into Muslim countries they feel a certain call to Holy War, to respond. And as they do, it is the clash of kingdom against kingdom.

It is the clash of religious idea in military garb against religious idea in military garb. It is literally what Jesus was telling us would be the nature of war: kingdom against kingdom, a reference... because ultimately of course the last of these types of wars will be the kingdom of God against the kingdom of darkness. We are ahead of ourselves, but the Kingdom of God will arise and will be in conflict with the kingdom of darkness and it will be war in the sense of the destruction of populations on the basis of kingdom against kingdom. It will also ultimately be war on the basis of race against race—a holy race against all of the races of mankind allied—but that's where it is leading. But here is where it starts and that is why it is a sign. It is a different kind of war.

We watched recently as the roaring and tossing of the sea obliterated villages and major

cities, the tsunami of 2004 obliterated villages killing up to 150,000 people and the storm surges that broke the dikes of New Orleans drowned a major American city. Don't for one moment think that these were sinners above all others. As Jesus would say, "I tell you no, but except you repent you will all likewise perish." (Inserted – actual verse —**“Jesus answered, ‘Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.’ – Luke 13:2,3)**) These are signs of the times: the roaring and the tossing of the sea.

Then there are earthquakes in various places. You see, these things do not so much speak of the massive destruction of human beings as much as the occurrence of the phenomena themselves. But we had an earthquake in Pakistan in 2005 that destroyed 50,000 people by the estimates of the Pakistani government. We have had not only earthquakes but we have had pestilences—diseases that run unchecked. The AIDS' report of 2005 indicated that over 30,000,000 people have died since the outbreak of the AIDS' virus and in 2005 over 5,000,000 new cases worldwide were recorded. But while men are wrestling with the AIDS' virus the scientists are anticipating with fear and trembling—and that would not be to overstate it—with fear and trembling, something called the bird flu which would dwarf, by comparison, the loss of life from the AIDS' virus, as tragic as that has been.

Famines are routinely the results of the disruptions of populations and these events of warfare, of the dislocation of populations, the decimation of generations and the like... famines are the routine responses. In fact, periodically major news magazines will report famines on the planet. All these things converging indicate, on one level, nature in revolt against man and the weight of man's sins and mankind being taken over by the spirit of murder, the spirit of deception manifesting itself in rejection of Christ and in the kinds of warfare that show the unrestrained heart of man in terms of murderous intent. We have no solutions but we will think we do. But as these things come—wave upon wave like a woman giving birth—we will soon see that our finances are insufficient, our technology is insufficient; we are incapable of protecting ourselves. These are the beginnings of sorrows but the end is not yet. Continue as we study about the signs in the heavens above. Then is when it really gets dramatic. I'm Sam Soleyn. I'll talk to you soon. God bless you.

Scripture References :

Galatians 1:8

Matthew 10:22

Luke 13:2,3

II Timothy 4:3,4

Matthew 24:6,7a

