

Current Affairs # 26 – Not as a Thief in the Night

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In continuing our discussion regarding the end of the age, let's not start at the end of the age. Let's start at the beginning, because the conflicts at the end of the age represent the culmination of what began when man was first confronted by the devil in the garden of Eden. God knew that such a conflict would occur, and even knew the outcome, so He prepared for the salvation of man *so that* man would engage the purposes of God as God intended. The gospel is not just how God created man, man sinned, Christ came to die for the sins of mankind, and whoever receives His salvation will go to heaven when they die.

I want to insert certain questions. The first question would be: Why go through all of that trouble? If that is your purpose for creating man, to save him, do not create him. Then you will not have to save him. That seems like an abrupt way to speak about these matters, but some then offer the thought that God was lonely. I even had one relatively famous writer say to me, "Could it be that God wanted to have an experience?" I thought, "How nonsensical. How are you going to have an experience when you know the end of every matter from the beginning? What is the room for the experience?" Nonsense. They are just sort of casting about. Those who venture beyond that paradigm, beginning with God created man and then man sinned, they would venture an answer that is as nonsensical as it gets, namely that God was lonely. He is God. He was complete. He is complete. So, no, God was not lonely; that is silly. It is as silly as God was wanting to have an experience. That is to cast God, the eternal Spirit, in the unsteady emotions of a human being. No. There is no truth to that.

The demand of God, the demand upon God, who is love, is demonstration. For love, like faith and hope, are imminently subject to demonstration and cannot be said to exist but for demonstration. So it was inevitable that God was going to create the other, because love does not exist without the other. In that configuration, God knew man would sin, because He knew what would come into the world. He knew that the rebellious one would come and try to pervert and distort and co-opt God's intention. God not only intended to demonstrate His love, but He also fully intended to demonstrate His justice. To that end, He created the heavens and the earth, and He put man in it, and He allowed Satan to come into it. So from the beginning, right after creation was established and Adam and Eve were placed in it, how long after that is not clear to anyone, but at some point

Satan was allowed to come into the garden, and with that began a conflict in creation of a rebellion against God and a challenge to God's sovereign authority. Now God, who knew the outcome, knew the end from the beginning, plans to hunt his enemy down and capture him and bring him to destruction, all the while maintaining the truth that God is love. "Yet," as He said when He spoke to Moses about His divine nature, He said, "Yet, God punishes the evildoer." In the case of Satan and the angels who fell with him, their punishment at the end of the age is annihilation.

These two themes began in the garden, but they began with the knowledge of God, with God knowing this was going to happen in creation. So the beginning of creation sees the seed of this conflict in the garden. Enmity would be sown between the offspring of the woman and Satan. Interestingly, it was called the Seed of the woman.¹ A woman is not known for producing seed. That typically is a reference to man: the seed of a man. But He is speaking of Mary, who carried the Seed of God; and He, this offspring, would crush the head of the serpent. All who are in this Spiritual Being, a natural being known as Jesus who housed the Spirit of Christ, who upon His resurrection is now available to have whoever God receives as a son to be propitiated, carried within the person of Christ, as spirit beings.

This duality of Scripture—that which is born of flesh and that which is born of Spirit, the visible and the invisible, the glory of God and the Kingdom of God, the darkness of the kingdom of darkness, the evil one and the sons of God—this duality is the framework of Scripture. And the inevitable end with the destruction of that which opposes God is the conclusion of this age, though it is not the conclusion of the story. Because beyond this age, Jesus will deliver up the Kingdom to the Father when He has crushed every aspect of this rebellion under His feet. We, by the way, are His feet. Then, He will hand up the Kingdom to the Father, free of opposition, free of resistance, free of enmity. And then, God will be all in all.

So there are coming ages. The book of Hebrews speaks of that. In chapter two, he says that, "It is not to angels that He has committed the rule of the age to come. But somewhere it is written, 'What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You should visit him. You made him a little lower than the angels (that is positionally, not authoritatively), yet You crowned him with glory and honor'" (cf. Hebrews 2:5-8), and uses Jesus as the template for this declaration. Jesus,

who was once made a little lower than the angels while He was on the earth like we are on the earth, now has returned to His sovereign place on the throne of God, and He is exalted above *all*—including the angels, both the ones who fell and the ones who did not fall. “He established Him far above all authority and rule and every title that may be given, not only in this present age but in the age to come. And He put everything under His feet and made Him head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.” (cf. Ephesians 1:20-23).

So, how benign is this gospel that begins with God created man, man sinned, Christ came to die for his sins, and if man receives and accepts that salvation, he will go to heaven when he dies? All that is true, but that is a temporary portion of the gospel. The greater gospel is how God created man as His son to carry His image and likeness in the earth by demonstrating the glory of God’s nature, which is to love. In doing so, God supported man with a Kingdom, with the authority of the throne of God. The highest authority in creation is the throne of God. That is why it is called the *Kingdom* of Heaven. But even the authority of that throne has been established in creation from the authority of God who is outside of creation, who holds all of creation in the breadth of His hand. So the power and the authority that is inherent in the Living God, the One who existed before creation, the One who made all things and without whom was nothing made that was made, and made all things for His pleasure, *this* God has supported the functioning of man in creation as God’s image and likeness. This is the working of His mighty power.

So what do we know about the outcome, then, of the conflict between a kingdom of darkness based in deception of man and the co-opting of authority that God gave to Adam to form an alternative kingdom to oppose the coming forth of what God originally intended? What is the destiny of that kingdom? It is going to be destroyed. It is going to be utterly destroyed, together with all of those who oppose God, including the angelic. Men and angels who oppose God are bound over for destruction. Angels who sinned cannot be saved. Man who has sinned can be saved. But if he refuses, if he neglects this great salvation, then his kingdom will be shaken along with all the things that can be shaken. The only thing that will never be shaken is the eternal Kingdom, because it is foundationed upon the authority of the Living God Himself, outside of time and space, beyond creation, but it is anchored in creation by the representation of divine authority focused upon the

throne of God. By the reference to “throne,” we understand that there is a Kingdom and a King. This theme started in the garden of Eden, and this theme will culminate when the age concludes. Jesus prophesied the culmination of the age and gave us distinct signs by which we will know when the end is upon us.

At this point, and before I launch into a discussion of these opposing kingdoms, I want to make it clear that God intends that His people be fully apprised of the times in which they live and the nearness of the return of the Lord. To that end, let me address a thing that is frequently and yet ignorantly advocated, and that is, according to Matthew 24:36 and according to Mark 13, that we will *not* know the day. So I want to show you a couple of these things very quickly. In Matthew 24:36 the following is said:

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:36-39 NKJV).

Let me add to that, the reading from Mark 13, because there are details in Mark 13 that are a parallel passage to this particular chapter that I think are critically important. So Jesus is speaking in Mark 13:31, and He says,

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Mark 13:31-32).

So He says no man knows, the angels in heaven do not know, the Son does not know, but only the Father. Here is my question, first: Does Jesus know the day of His own return now? Shall I read it again? “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, **nor the Son** [Look at it yourself: **nor the Son.**], but only the Father.” These erstwhile theologians who quote this verse

to prevent anyone from examining the matter any further are stuck with denying that Jesus actually knows the day of His own return. This is where you catch men in their own follies.

Let me show you certain aspects, and I will come right back to this, because there is a revelation that you need to know about that addresses Matthew 24:36 and it addresses Mark 13:32. What is it? It says [in Matthew 24:37-39],

- “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man. For as in the days before the flood, *they*...”—note this distinction: they. There is us, and there is them. There is one side and the other. This duality I have been speaking about: there is *us* and there is *they*.
- “...*they* were eating and drinking”—Was Noah eating and drinking, in the sense of partying? No. He was building the ark.
- “...marrying and giving in marriage”— Was Noah given to multiple marriages, and the like? No. He had one wife and his three sons each had one wife each.
- “...until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took *them* all away”—Was Noah taken away with the flood? And did he not know the day of the flood?
- It analogizes and says, “...so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” To whom? We will get to that in a moment.

But before we do, look at this. This is Genesis 7:4-7. This is the story of Noah and the ark and the days of the flood, as recorded in Genesis, beginning with verse 4. God is speaking to Noah:

“For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made.” And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him. Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth.

So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives [a total of eight], went into the ark because of the waters of the flood (Genesis 7:4-7 NKJV, comments added in brackets).

Noah knew the day seven days before. How did he know? God told him. That is why he was not caught scrambling to get into the ark. Seven days before, Noah entered the ark, because God told him, “In seven days this is what I am going to do.” Now God did not tell Noah to build the ark seven days before the flood. He told him to get *into* the ark that had been prepared for one hundred twenty years, seven days before the flood. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man for those who are distracted by the pleasures of this world and are not looking, not seeing. But the other side of this question is about those who are not like the world, but who are like Noah, who are watching and waiting. To you, here is the answer. First Thessalonians, chapter 5, verses 1-5 say the following.

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness (1 Thessalonians 1:1-5).

- “But concerning the times and the seasons, **brethren**”—So, he is writing to brothers, the brethren, the believers—the Apostle Paul is writing to the church at Thessalonica.
- “But concerning **the times and the seasons**”—speaking specifically of the days of the return of the Lord.
- “...you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes **as a thief in the night.**”— Does that mean the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night to the brethren? Well, let’s read on.
- “For when **they** say, ...”—Here is the same *them* and *us*, *they* and *you*.
- “For when they say, **Peace and safety...!**”—By the way, much of the prophetic that I am hearing right now are telling us that by Easter, there will be peace and safety.
- “...then sudden destruction comes upon **them**, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman.”— To *them* it will be as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. I want you to note that expression, “labor pains upon a pregnant woman,” because I want to refer to it further on, but not now.

- “...then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And **they** shall not escape. But **you**, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. **You** are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5 NKJV).

This day should not catch you unawares. But what about the Scripture we began this with when we read from Mark 13:32 and Matthew 24:36 that says, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angles which are in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”? Does Jesus know the day of His own return? That is not a sentimental question meant to back people into a corner. Let me give you the answer to that question very directly. That is why you cannot rely on dead doctrines.

So here it is in Revelation, chapter 1, verse 1, and I want you to read it. It will surprise you. I promise you, you have never seen this before. I will read it first the way you might read it.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

That is the answer to Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32. And you say, “What is the answer? I did not get it.” Now I will read it slowly. I am not trying to be pedantic or condescending. I am saying that unless there is a sent one, you will *not* see and you will *not* hear; because you just read it and did not see it. I spoke it and you did not hear it. Now let me unpack it for you.

- “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which **God gave Him...**”—Whose revelation is it? Who is the recipient of the revelation?
 - Let’s ask the question first: Who gave the revelation? “...which **God** gave Him...” So, God gave the revelation.
 - Who is the “Him” to whom God gave the revelation? Jesus Christ. He is the Son who did not know. There was a time when He said, “No man knows,” present tense—He was in the flesh at the time, before He ascended to the Father and resumed the glory He had with the Father before the creation of the world. There is

where He is now, enthroned in that sovereign majesty, and He has the revelation of when He is coming back. Right here it says so. “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave **Him...**” Who else did not know? Now the Son knows.

- “...to show His **servants...**”—So that would be man. But let’s be more definitive.
- “to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His **angel...**”—So angels know.
- “...to His servant **John**”—Now John knows.

This revelation contains the events about the end of the age, and sent ones, men of wisdom, will unpack the signs and the seasons so that the House of God will know, and you will not be surprised like those in the days of Noah were surprised, or like those who are drunk and walking in darkness will be surprised.

Then let’s continue to unpack this mystery.

Endnotes:

1. See Genesis 3:15 NKJV: “And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”