

We have been commanded by Jesus to know the signs of His return. As sure as the heavens and the earth will stand, the prophetic Word of Jesus will come to pass just as He said it would. As we study the end-times, it is imperative to let scripture interpret scripture. This takes time. But rather than dissect half of a verse, we should see the Word of the Lord directing us from the beginning. Every story is His story.

I. FALSE CHRISTS

Matthew 24

3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" 4 And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. 6 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. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

9 "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. 10 And then many will fall away [1] and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. 23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 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.

- A. The very first warning we have from Jesus is concerning false Christ's. Those who proclaim and direct the hearts of the church toward themselves without regard to loyalty to Jesus. This is the first warning of Jesus. What does that look like?
- B. These false messengers will come "in the name of Jesus." They will come declaring the endorsement of heaven without loyalty to the scripture or the faith. They will pull the hearts of the church towards themselves. They will sit in the place of Jesus.
- C. I believe we have entered into this season in such a widespread way we can barely discern our error. When we have men and women who are more than all right being called "God's anointed oracle," and "God's man or woman of the hour," we have entered into error. Where are the friends of the Bridegroom?
- D. There is a falseness that has crept in unnoticed. Deception has blinded the church. We have stopped teaching and instructing the saints in the standard of the Lord. We have a new standard...do they leave happy? As if that has anything to do with releasing the Word of the Lord. It affects our services, our worship... When we are more concerned if the song choice has enough dynamics to move the crowd,

and not at all concerned with whether the worship is actually worship, then we have not only been deceived, but are partnering in the deception.

Matthew 7

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

- E. The issue here isn't about works. These people are doing ministry in the name of Jesus. There is just one problem, they were not sent ones. They were doing ministry and yet not doing the will of the Father.
- F. Have we understood this? Have we comprehended that we can be in the middle of ministry and completely out of the will of God? We have so many things that have been produced out of the realm of our own soul. Can we actually discern what a true move of the Spirit is?

1 Corinthians 2

2:1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, [1] did not come proclaiming to you the testimony [2] of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

- G. Would we be able to discern a man of the Spirit like Paul today? Would we give credence to a man or ministry that was marked with fear (of God), trembling and weakness? Would we? What about our nation? What about our region? The demonstration of the cross is trembling and weakness, even death.
- H. The false Christ will proclaim a resurrection without the death. The false Christ will declare authority without the fruit of submission. This is exactly what Jesus warns His disciples about.

II. FALSE TEACHERS

2 Peter 2

2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

- A. Is this not timeless? It sounds as if Peter were writing in the year 2009! It's a subtle shift from the centrality of the Living One, Jesus. Instead of Jesus our Teacher, we have settled for a man/woman telling us what the Word of the Lord is. If the veil has been torn, why have we put up our own sheet? It's been said that churches often pay their preachers to protect them from God.
- B. A true teacher will direct you to The Teacher. Not protect you from Him. A true teacher will desire the "unity of the faith," not accolades and immaturity.

- C. A false teacher is marked with three primary things: Denying Jesus, sensuality, and greed.

Philippians 3

18 For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

- D. The false messenger has their mind set on earthly things. This is the root of the problem.

10 and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones,

- E. Though these false messengers claim to have authority, they in fact despise authority. They do not tremble. What a statement! They do not tremble. They stand as ambassadors of another reality and yet they do not tremble. This alone is the height of presumption and arrogance.

James 3

3:1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

13...They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. 14 They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! 15 Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, 16 but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

- F. Unsteady souls are drawn into their ways. Here's a good marker for the spirituality of the teacher/minister... are those around them maturing? Are those around them humble? Are those around them trembling with the fear of the Lord? This is the true condition of the leader/teacher.

17 These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. 18 For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. 19 They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. 20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.

- G. They will get darkness because they loved their darkness more than light. This is what they desired. They promise what they cannot deliver.

Matthew 12

33 *“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.*

- H. Considering the warning, and whom it comes from, we should be careful to inspect the fruit. Signs can be deceiving. What is the fruit of the life? This is godly. This is right. And this is our job as the church. There is nothing wrong with looking at the manner of life. Does it line with scripture? With meekness? With trembling and weakness?

2 Thess 3

7 *For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you,*

III. FALSE PROPHETS

Jeremiah 23

15 *for from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has gone out into all the land.”*

- A. This statement is so profound and weighty. To come to terms with this...that the state of the land is the statement of the spiritual condition of the church. The land languishes because the sons of God have not been revealed!!!!

Romans 8

19 *For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.*

- B. The land is subjected to bondage because the sons have not been revealed.

16 *Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. 17 They say continually to those who despise the word of the Lord, ‘It shall be well with you’; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, ‘No disaster shall come upon you.’”*

- C. There is so much at stake for playing at this...not only our own soul, but also our family...our entire generation. This passage seems to be timeless. And why, because it is truly the Word of the Lord! He speaks out of time. He speaks to every generation. Every culture. To think that we have conferences designed around the ridiculous question of how to make God relevant. This is a statement of our falseness. This is a statement of our falseness. God is relevant!

18 *For who among them has stood in the council of the Lord to see and to hear his word, or who has paid attention to his word and listened? 19 Behold, the storm of the Lord! Wrath has gone forth, a whirling tempest; it will burst upon the head of the wicked. 20 The anger of the Lord will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intents of his heart. In the latter days you will understand it clearly.*

- D. The awakened church will be prophetic. After all, what have they been awakened to but the Word of the Lord? Is it possible that Joel 2/ Acts 2 have to do with this passage? All flesh. The wicked will connect with the Spirit of the Lord on all flesh, but what does that look like?

- E. It seems that God's wrath is directed to the false prophetic movement. When we think of the wicked, is the first thing that comes to mind the false prophetic movement or the pimp?

21 "I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied.

- F. It's arrogance and a presumption that marks this false movement. Have we trembled at the Word we've been given to speak? Is it a good idea? Or is it a Word from the Lord?

1 Corinthians 2

2:1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, [1] did not come proclaiming to you the testimony [2] of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

- G. If we have not understood this then we have not begun to hear the Word of the Lord. If there is no fear, no comprehension of weakness, no trembling...then it is not a Word from the Lord. We have asked for the power of God, but have we said yes to weakness, fear and trembling.

2 Corinthians 4

7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.

- H. If we would only say yes to the trembling...the responsibility of the Word, not just the momentary high of delivering the thing... the elation of being used by God, then we would surely tremble. Because whatever we are given we will be held accountable for. This is weighty.

22 But if they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds.

- I. This promise is so sure and so simple. We have only one need...to hear the Word of the Lord.

23 "Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? 24 Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord. 25 I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' 26 How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, 27 who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? 28 Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the Lord. 29 Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

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- J. The Word of the Lord is a fire. It cannot be handled. It cannot be touched. It cannot be manipulated. It is a fire. The Word of the Lord is like a hammer. When the Word of the Lord has been released the landscape of our hearts is altered. The lofty places are brought to nothing. Our good ideas are laid flat.

2 Corinthians 10

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, 6 being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.