
There is a distinct order about how the end-times unfold. Jesus never has and never will mislead us. He is faithful to prepare us. From His beginning address in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us plainly and truly what happiness is. He explains the upside down Kingdom and invites us into fellowship. In His faithfulness to us, He also prepares us for the days and hours ahead. We can be certain that His Word will sustain us.

I. AFTER THE TRIBULATION

Matthew 24

29 *“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. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

- A. We will be here during the tribulation. We must prepare with sobriety for the days ahead. There will be a real crisis in the earth. There will be real choices to make. There will be a real line in the sand. We must remain loyal to Jesus!
- B. Right now, we are learning who He is and how to trust Him. Right now, we are preparing our hearts through the Word and the testing of many trials. Thank God for the trials. It is for the perfecting of our faith. It is for the refining of our love.

James 1

2 *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

1 Peter 1

6 *In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

- C. Like a good coach, Jesus will test us. Not for our failure, but for our preparation. He is wise in His leadership. Think upon this truth: You do not know the difficulty of the hour. But He knows. You do not know the severity of what lies ahead. But He knows. We can must trust Him. Every season is about knowing Him and learning to trust His leadership in our lives.
- D. We can be sure of this, if we aren't tested we will not be prepared. We talk about being faithful to the end, but we need to be faithful today. If you don't train today, you cannot possibly endure to the end. There is a direct corrolation between proper training and final success.

1 Corinthians 9

24 *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but*

we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

- E. Beloved it is possible to know the truth...to preach the truth and yet live into a lesser standard. This is possible. It is possible to be disqualified. This ought to sober our hearts. We can leave the faith.
- F. Charles Finney said that in the backsliding heart, theology was the last thing to fall apart. Our appetite for God diminishes, our pursuit fails...all the while we preach the same. Theology is the last thing to go.

Hebrews 12

3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. 4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. 6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." 7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

- G. The tribulation is not about wrath...it is the discipline of God released in the earth. We will be trained by it. We will be refined in it. We will endure through it. And in it, our lives will yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness! This is why we can say yes to the Lord. Because we are His garden, and He knows how to prune us just right.
- H. We have prayed the prayer...God do whatever you have to do in us so that we love your Son the way you do...and He will answer this prayer.

II. HEAVENS AND EARTH SHAKEN

Matthew 24

29 "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. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man..."

- A. After the tribulation, everything is shaken. As if the tribulation were not enough to get our attention...the Lord shakes everything that can be shaken.

Hebrews 12

25 See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. 26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." 27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things

that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

Revelation 6

12 When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. 14 The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. 15 Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave [5] and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, 16 calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

Luke 21

25 “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

We need to deal with the accusation and offense in our own heart today. The training that we are in today will prepare us for this hour. Jesus is going to come again! When he comes, everything will be shaken. The earth that was spoken into existence at His command will respond to Him again.

III. THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN

Matthew 24

30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

- A. After the discipline of the tribulation, and the shaking of all that can be shaken... THEN Jesus will come! We can endure because of the hope set before us. Our hope isn't a Cadillac, or bigger house...our hope is Jesus. We can endure the training because we have a firm hope in the prize.

Phil 3

12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own (perfection in Christ). But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. 16 Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

- B. I am convinced that there is no way to endure to the end without living a focused life now. Most of the shaking and discipline we are going through right now has to do with just one thing: Jesus is not our

hope. Right under the surface we have other goals, expectations, ambitions and desires besides knowing Jesus. God in His love for us reveals our true state. Under all the Christian lingo, the true state of our heart must be exposed to us. He already knows our condition. We have to come to terms with our weakness...it's the only way we will choose to lean.

Revelation 11

15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

IV. THE SEVENTH TRUMPET AND THE RAPTURE

Matthew 24

31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

A. When Jesus returns we will be called to meet Him in the air. We will be raptured at His coming.

1 Thess 4

15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, [4] that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15

51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

B. The return of Jesus is not just glorious for Jesus, we too will be changed at His coming. We will be transformed. For the first time our bodies will cooperate with our spirit. For the first time, we will have peace. When He comes we will be made like Him.

49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall [6] also bear the image of the man of heaven. (1 Cor. 15)

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. (Phil. 3)

2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears [1] we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3)

C. The glorious return of Christ is our hope. When He comes, we will be made like Him. Yes we will see Him as He is, but we will also become as He is.