

Is Matthew 24 Knocking at the Door?

Joe Slater

I saw a sign on a denominational meeting house which read: "Matthew 24 Is Knocking At The Door." In Matthew 24, Jesus warned His disciples about the impending destruction of Jerusalem. He alerted them to watch for signs of the approaching disaster so that they could escape the carnage. Within forty years of Jesus' prediction, the Roman army came, besieged the city, and then utterly wiped it out. Matthew 24 knocked at the door over 1900 years ago!

Unfortunately, careless Bible students have had a field day erroneously claiming that the signs Jesus mentioned will occur immediately before He returns to judge the world. The Lord's own words refute any such notion, for He said all those events he foretold would occur during the lifetime of those who heard Him (24:34). Many of those people were still alive when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70; but surely everyone knows that not one person who heard Jesus speak in Matthew 24 remains alive in the flesh today!

Nevertheless, every time there is another famine, earthquake, or episode of Middle-East violence, you can bank on the false prophets carrying on about the "signs" indicating the end is near! Recent events with Israel and Gaza will likely stir the pot once again.

Although Matthew 24 is not "knocking at the door" in the sense of warning us that Jesus is about to return, it does teach us valuable lessons. Jerusalem was destroyed because of her sin and unfaithfulness toward God. The Bible teaches that whenever Jesus does return, sin and unfaithfulness will result in eternal "destruction from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thessalonians 1:9). To

the lukewarm, unfaithful church at Laodicea, Jesus said: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him . . ." (Revelation 3:20).

Our task is not to calculate the date when Jesus will come again; it is to be faithful and ready for His return at all times.



TEMPLE, PRIEST, AND SACRIFICE

In the Mosaic system, there was a temple of gold and stone, "the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make His name dwell there" (Deuteronomy 12:11). Priests offered sacrifices in it; priests were required to be of the tribe of Levi, and descendants of Aaron (Numbers 18). Sacrifices of lambs, bulls, and other animals had to be without disease or blemish; the priests offered them for the sins of the people (Leviticus 5:18; 6:6).

In Christ, Christians are God's temple, the dwelling place of His Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). In this temple, Christians are a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices to God (1 Peter 2:5). And Christians are the sacrifices – living sacrifices which they, as priests, offer (Romans 12:1).

Temple, priest, and sacrifice – Christians are "the whole ball of wax"!

Cecil May, Jr. (via Preacher Talk)

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*Lord, give me a heart that is never vain,
And soft enough to feel another's pain!*

Winning Souls

I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some (I Corinthians 9:22b NASU).

Soul winning takes wisdom and good social skills. Soul winning isn't just about winning arguments but winning souls. We must become students of those we wish to teach. Paul sought to find common ground when he addressed the men of Athens: "As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring'" (Acts 17:28b).

Paul, as the master teacher, said, "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well" (I Thessalonians 2:8). He likens himself to a caring father and a nursing mother. No flattery, no bribery, no greed – just the good, clean gospel. He was especially grateful that when they received the good news, they received it as the word of God and not the word of men.

Christians are in the seed planting and watering business. We are but servants in the master's hand, One plants and another waters, but it is God who gives the increase (see I Corinthians 3:5-9).

We live in some very precarious times. Nothing new, but it is our time. The book of Jude points out an anti-God sentiment. At the close of the letter, Jude entreats his readers with this: "Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear, hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh" (Jude 1:22, 23).

We need to be careful that it is God who is leading us and we are not being led astray by others. Soul winning takes people sense, Bible sense, and common sense.

--Roger Holm (Tijeras, NM)