

## What time is it?



This time period that we are in is a very specific time as far as the “timetable of God” is concerned and the return of Jesus. I do not think that we are in those last seven years. However, as I have mentioned in previously essays, I do believe that we are getting closer and closer to the period of the “end times” and the “seven year tribulation” period.

We take a look around us and we see many “interesting things” taking place. We all are very much aware of what is happening in Israel. However, we do know that Israel will ultimately yield to the “calls” and background pressures of those leaders in this world (unfortunately, the United States is one of them) and they will cease their attacks on Hamas and Hezbollah. It is actually taking place even as this article is being written. No one wants war but Israel has the right to defend and protect itself and to destroy its enemies – Hamas and Hezbollah.

Let us also not forget what is taking place in the Ukraine and the attacks by Russia against that nation. It seems to have taken a backseat to the events in Israel. However, it is still very much an attack of war by the nation of Russia and its leadership against Ukraine, which by the way, is a Catholic/Christian nation. It is interesting to note that most of the people of Russia are actually against the actions of their own government. However, the Russian leadership is still going forward and there is still a war that is raging on.

The horrible atrocities that are taking place in Sudan and the “ethnic cleansing” that is taking place which have been around a long time but have recently, as of April of this year have escalated in that nation, is an ongoing abomination by the forces of evil. A war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary group known as the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), rival factions of the military government of Sudan, began on 15 April 2023, with the fighting concentrated around the capital city of Khartoum and the Darfur region. Unfortunately, many of the Christian Sudanese people in other parts of Sudan are being attacked and “eliminated” by both sides.

Of course we are all well aware of the things that are going on throughout the world in areas other than “out and out” warfare. There is the horrific events of that mass shooting in the rural community of Maine. At least 18 people were killed and, at the writing of this article, the

gunman still has not been captured. This is just the latest of the too many “mass shootings” that have happened in this country and throughout the world in recent times

There is a “war” going on against the concept of who we are as people. The “gay” agenda is spreading and growing like wildfire. The attack on the minds of our children in schools and in social media are ravaging and corrupting the morals of our children at such a young age.

There is a strong movement in the schools as well in the mainstream to accept the gay lifestyle and other factions of that lifestyle for our children. It is even to the point of approving some children to begin the process of having sex changes at the ages of four and five. That is insane. They are not even fully grown, yet they will be physically changed because of the perverseness of the society we are in.

The prison systems are bursting at the seams. There is no room for all the criminals so they are being released from prisons early and from jails “on their own reconnaissance.” According to the National Institute of Justice, almost 44% of criminals released from prison or jail, return before their first year out of prison.

The list goes on and on. As mentioned previously, I believe these are all signs of the end times. We know that the Bible is clear in telling us that there will be an increase of wickedness and perversion as we draw nearer to the tribulation period. However, the Bible also tells us that during that terrible time of lawlessness and disreputable behavior, there will also be a time of many who will want to hear the Good News and give their lives to our God.

The Bible is very clear in telling us this. How will that all take place and what does it actually mean? It will be accomplished by simply telling people the Good News of salvation through Jesus. However, with that, will come a time of great persecution. Will we be ready???

Many of the Biblical prophets speak of an outpouring of God’s Spirit in the end times. This all began on that first Pentecost, over 2000 years ago, when the Holy Spirit was given to the new Body of Christ. Peter declared that God will “pour out His Spirit” as God had declared in the Book of Joel (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:14-18). Yes, the Holy Spirit was given and poured out to all the believers and this is still happening today.

In Matthew 24:14, Jesus speaks of the Gospel, the Good News, being preached to the whole world and then He declares, "...and **then the end will come.**" Jesus does not really indicate what the response to the preaching will be. He just declares that the Good News shall be preached to every person. Jesus stated a few verses earlier that, "*At that time many will turn away from the faith...and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, **the love of most will grow cold***" (Matthew 24:10–12).

We see that the apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, did not seem to think there would be a "worldwide revival" either. Paul actually tells us that there will be many that will leave the truth of the faith. He states in 1Timothy 4:1-2, "*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.*"

Paul tells us that these "end times" would be, and they will be, very difficult times. He writes again to Timothy in 2Timothy 3:1, "*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.*" Paul continues to write to Timothy and to us today, about the terrible things that will be taking place at that time. He gives a list that includes men loving themselves (in other words living for themselves and not thinking of others); they shall be covetous, boasting of how great they are; proud; blasphemous against the things of God; disobedient to their parents, only thinking of themselves; and basically they become unholy. The list goes on to declare all of what we see taking place now, in our time. (2Timothy 3:2-8)

Paul ultimately tells Timothy, and us today, to **turn away** from those things. Yes, we are to turn 180° away from that way of thinking and turn to God and His way of thinking. You can only do that if you are truly born again. However, we must take note that the Bible is clear about telling the believer that this will be very difficult - even for the true believer.

As stated previously, in Matthew 24:10-12 Jesus makes it very clear and I will state it again as He states, "*At that time **many will turn away from the faith...and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love** (towards God) **of most will grow cold***" This is quite opposite from what we are hearing from many of the religious leaders and pastors these days. They are telling us that it all will be great. Hmmm....

However, in Matthew 24:13-14 Jesus states it very clearly to all those who will stay faithful unto Him, "***But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.***" Yes, they that **endure to the end** shall be saved. Those that continually bring the Good News to anyone who will listen and hear it, shall be saved.

The word "endure" means to remain firm under **suffering** or misfortune without yielding. It means to remain **until the end**. Yes, as true believers, we will need to endure pain and even suffering through those harsh and very difficult end times. That is when the true believers who are living at that time will truly be seen. The true believer who is living at that time will go through difficult times but if they "endure to the end" they will receive their reward in heaven.

Paul states that the last days will be characterized by a great "**apostasy**." Apostasy means the total rejection of Jesus and of Christianity by a baptized person. That is one who truly had professed Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord. They will turn and then publicly reject Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord. The writers of the New Testament are very clear in telling us and warning the believers of this. Why, you may ask? So that we will know that our walk with God will not be "pie in the sky" but rather it will be difficult and dangerous.

In 2Thessalonians 2:3, Paul tells us about this, "*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a **falling away first**, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*" Yes, the antichrist will come. However, there will also be a great falling away by many believers from their faith in Jesus during that time, as well.

Paul states that at the end time there will not be a "great revival" but instead there will be a great "falling away" from faith in Jesus. Paul states that there will be a "falling away" from the truth, as many professing believers will abandon the faith and reject Biblical teaching as well as the fullness of all the truth concerning Jesus in those days leading up to the tribulation and during the tribulation period.

The New Testament speaks of a coming move among the Jewish people/Israel and that many will turn to Jesus. Romans 11:25-27 tells us, *“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”*

This scripture seems to tell us that the Jewish people will one day be “softened” and opened to hearing and receiving the Gospel. God will give them a final opportunity to receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord. It is happening in this hour. More and more Jewish people are hearing about and then receiving Jesus as their Messiah, their Savior and Lord.

In the Book of Revelation it makes mention of what seems to be a revival among Jewish people during the time of tribulation. This “revival” is led by 144,000 Jewish evangelists (see Revelation 7). The tribulation will have the effect of turning Jewish hearts to their true Messiah as it was prophesied in the Old Testament in Jeremiah 30:7-9, *“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David (Jesus) their king, whom I will raise up unto them.”*

God is so very, very good. He desires no one to perish but that all would come to the saving knowledge of Jesus. This includes both, the Jewish person and the Gentile. If you truly read the Gospel accounts you will see that Jesus did go to the Gentiles as well as the Jewish people. The Apostles, always preached “to the Jew first.” Then it was opened up and preached to the Gentiles. The opposite will take place in the end times.

God never has, nor will He ever forget, the Jewish people. They were the people that He chose to show Himself to the world through. He will never leave them nor forsake them. They will have the opportunity to accept Jesus as their Messiah, their Savior and their Lord.

In Revelation 3:14-22 we read of the message that was given to the church at Laodicea. This was a church that was in Asia Minor or modern day Turkey. It was one of the seven churches that Jesus gave a message to the Apostle John to write to. We read in Revelation 3:15 that Jesus begins by telling them, *"I know your works..."* Wow!!! Yes, Jesus knows everything about everything concerning each one of us. Jesus goes on to tell this church, *"...that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue (vomit) thee out of my mouth."* We see that they were neither cold nor hot. They were "lukewarm." So what does this mean?

Jesus used the imagery that the listeners could relate to. The water supply to Laodicea came from another city called Hierapolis. At Hierapolis, there were "hot springs" where people would go and re-invigorate themselves in a way that we might say today as, going to a spa. The water would then run a few miles through an aqueduct to Laodicea and then to a city south of them where the water would, by that time, be so cold it would bring true refreshment, "like a cup of cold water." Laodicea was somewhere "in the middle" and the water was "lukewarm." in other words it was really good for neither cleansing or for true refreshment. It was blah!!!

The "church of Laodicea" was not on fire for God and they were not cold to God. They were "lukewarm." They decided to make a nice compromise and just be "lukewarm" to the things of God and everybody would be happy. Now we may say, well they were not all bad. They were simply living life. Unfortunately that doesn't cut it to God. He desires you to be "hot" for Him.

If you are "hot" and on fire for God, then you are doing His works. If you are "cold" to God, then He will continue to reach out to you in your unbelief and you may possibly accept Him. However, if you are "lukewarm" you have *"...a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof."* From this type of behavior and lifestyle we are told by Jesus, *"...**from such turn away.**"* You will ultimately fall away when the truly hard times come, as we have previously discussed.

The sad thing is that the Laodicean church would not even know nor would they realize their "lukewarmness." They would think that everything was fine. Jesus, in His love for His Bride, His Body, gives them a "door of opportunity." They are "spiritually naked" and need to be clothed and brought back into their "right standing" with Him. This is always symbolized by

“the white garments” of righteousness – true right standing with and in God. Could this be where some of us are at? Could many of us be “lukewarm?” Hmm.....

The last days will be a troubling and alarming time. However, we can take comfort in the fact that Jesus has “overcome the world” (John 16:33). We must keep our eyes on Him and let His light shine in and through us. We should desire to bring glory to our God as we await our Savior’s return. We must be watchful, ready and “hot and on fire” for our God. The worst way we can be is “lukewarm.”

When the real difficulties come, and they will, will we be ready!!! Will we be watching!!! I pray that we all are and always will be – ready and watching!!! We need to always keep our eyes on the signs of the time – God’s time!!! Remember, God’s time is perfect!!!