

Finding Joy Amid World's Chaos

Matthew 24:6 says, "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come."

I'm not quite ready, just yet, to put on my "The End is Nigh!" sandwich board and go about street-preaching in Times Square. Still, for anyone gifted with the spirit of discernment, it's hard to ignore the heavy stench of unparalleled spiritual warfare that hangs thick in the air. It pongs as sulfur from Old Faithful in every corner of the earth.

The world is in chaos as never before. Read the news. You see it. You feel it. You know it.

Here's the shortlist: The specter of an Ebola pandemic; jihadist genocide; the exploding conflict in Israel, Gaza and the larger Middle East; Russia; China; a nearly nuclear Iran; the American border crisis; the faltering global economy; sexual anarchy; child corruption; the deconstruction of marriage; the abortion holocaust; worldwide rebellion against God's natural order; and a whole lot more.

It looks as though, at any moment, it might all come crashing down with universally catastrophic consequences.

And it might.

The enemy of man knows that his time is short. A spirit of antichrist has come upon the world. It has come to deceive, and it has come to destroy.

He is the father of lies. He hates all mankind, but, mostly, he hates God's faithful—"People of the Book": Christians and Jews—those who have been washed, redeemed and made whole by

the Blood of the Lamb, as well as our old-covenant brothers and sisters.

None of this is unexpected. For the Christian, “Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of. ...” (2 Tim. 3:12-14)

Have we reached the end of the age? I don’t presume to know. But I do wonder.

The world has aligned against Israel. Even the United States, under the pagan governance of Barack Hussein Obama, has betrayed its once greatest ally. “When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near” (Luke 21: 20).

To this end, the enemy has enlisted an unholy trinity, an Islamo-“progressive” axis of evil consisting of Islamists, Western “progressives” and the false church (i.e., Christians-in-name-only such as the anti-Semitic, pro-abortion, pro-sexual-immorality Presbyterian Church USA).

The only explanation, as far as I can tell, as to what drives this bizarre and superficially incongruous alliance is best illustrated by the maxim: “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

But who is this common enemy?

Well, it, too, is signified by an alliance. It consists of Christians and Jews worldwide. It too is built around a shared cause.

But unlike that of the Islamo-“progressive” axis, this cause intends freedom, not tyranny—representative democracy, not control. Most importantly, this Judeo-Christian cause is built

upon the rock of truth given us by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The God of the living, not the dead. The great "I Am."

At this very moment around the globe—in Gaza, Israel, Sudan, the Philippines, Syria, Iraq and elsewhere—we lay witness to a monumental jihadist uprising that seeks to impose an Islamic caliphate and shariah law on the entire civilized world. Yet, despite this exploding campaign of mass Muslim genocide and a burgeoning anti-Christian holocaust, we likewise witness an inexplicable groundswell of anti-Semitic and anti-Christian hostility in the West.

Incredibly, we see a mass spiritual deception that has led to widespread support for Islamic terrorists, not unlike those in Iraq and Syria, who are gleefully slaughtering, by the thousands, Christians, Jews and even other Muslims perceived to pose a political threat (consider the Western left's obtuse support for the terrorist group Hamas).

No amount of evidence, logic or reason seems sufficient to pry open the eyes of Western liberals, "moderate" Muslims and other apologists for that violent socio-political tradition called fundamentalist Islam.

That's because it is spiritually, rather than cerebrally, discerned.

Still, for the believer, for the true Christ follower, there is joy amid chaos. My friend John Kirkwood, a pastor and columnist from the Chicago area, addressed this phenomenon in a recent exchange he had with one of his readers.

Reader: How do you stay sane with all that's happening in the world?

Me: I'm a Christian. The central questions are all answered for me, so the peripheral distractions can't steal my joy.

Paul wrote the epistle of joy while under Roman house arrest and awaiting the verdict of Nero for a capital crime.

Obama is a piker compared to Nero.

For the believer, life is beautiful regardless of circumstance, of others, of things or the lack of things, or even of worry. Anxiety isn't an option for the faithful.

I fail often in only recognizing the ugly, but I'm making a point not to allow the world to obstruct my view. May both my witness and my testimony become more and more redemptive.

On his death bed, Patrick Henry said, "Doctor, I wish you to observe how real and beneficial the religion of Christ is to a man about to die. ... I am, however, much consoled by reflecting that the religion of Christ has, from its first appearance in the world, been attacked in vain by all the wits, philosophers and wise ones, aided by every power of man, and its triumphs have been complete."

This is how the Christ follower, the true believer, faces death.

Triumphantly.

Indeed, even as a toxic cloud of anti-Semitic, anti-Christian hate swells black and envelops our blue-green orb, those who attack—that unholy, pagan trinity of Islam, "progressivism" and the false church—attack in vain.

The world may, or may not, be on its deathbed.

But it is terminally ill.

Yet even as I write these words, deep joy wells within. For as it is written, "You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word" (Psalm 119:114).

Fellow believers, we are but visitors in a foreign land. Our

home is elsewhere.

And so we tarry in joy, even amid the chaos, so that others may join us.

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