

The End-Times Sign You Dare Not Miss

In the words of an old Gordon Jensen song, "Signs of the time are everywhere./There's a brand-new feeling in the air." These words are ever increasing in their veracity. All around us, violence is on the rise. The tensions of inter-racial relationships seem to be increasing rather than growing better. Political differences divide our nation like never before in our history. Internationally wars and the rumor of wars abound. Natural catastrophes are occurring on a record-breaking scale.

Deception is on the rise even within the ranks of the church. Many seem determined to follow after signs blindly even if the source appears questionable. While signs and wonders are still valid for today, Jesus gives us a strong warning about false prophets who would come with great signs and wonders (see Matt. 24:24). We dare not qualify something as being of the Lord just because it appears to be supernatural. Jesus instructed us to, "Take heed that no one deceives you" (Matt. 24:4b). The followers of Jesus must be discerning so that no one causes us to wander from the path of truth. The church must avoid both sensationalism and skepticism; living open to the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit but not ignoring affirmations, attitudes and actions that are contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said lawlessness would abound in the last days, and we see it on every hand. Many, even in the church, want to cast off anything that brings restraint to their lifestyle choices. Under the guise of being free, they mistakenly act as if freedom equals a life without boundaries. But real freedom isn't the right to do our own thing, but the enabling of grace to do the God-thing! Jesus also predicted that with a lawless attitude, true love would grow cold. When people live as their

own standard, they inevitably chill in their love toward others.

These seven continual signs Jesus gave as indicators of the end (see Matt. 24:6-12) are ever increasing in our generation. He then goes on to talk about what can be called climatic signs. He mentions stars falling; the sun darkened, light-less moon, sea and waves roaring and so on (see Matt. 24:29-35 and Luke 21:26). But it seems to me His most impacting point is the one most easily skimmed over in the search for the signs of His coming.

He says, "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating, drinking, marrying, and were given in marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built" (Luke 17:26-28). Jesus plainly describes the days of the end as being similar to the time of the flood and the destruction of Sodom and the surrounding cities.

What is amazing is that He doesn't reference the wickedness of Noah's time nor the perversion of Lot's time. What He does reference is the preoccupation of the people with living their lives to the max! Nothing Jesus mentions is inherently sinful. Good food, engaging in commerce, planting, building and celebrating marriage are all activities that are meant to be enjoyed. But Jesus says the people were so engrossed in the attempt to carve out the best life for themselves and their children that they missed the signs of impending doom.

Jesus warns us, "Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts become burdened by excessiveness and drunkenness and anxieties of life, and that Day comes on you unexpectedly" (Luke 21:34). Deception is not just something we guard against from false prophets. We must guard our hearts against self-deception. James says that we can hear the word, even get excited about

it and “Amen” it, but if we don’t put it into practice in our personal lives—we deceive ourselves (see James 1:22).

Today, our challenge is to learn how to be awake and stay awake to the things of eternity while living here and now. Jesus promised abundant living to His followers (John 10:10) and is the One who “richly gives us all things to enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17b). It is evident that Abba delights in blessing His children in this life. But He calls us to live with our heart set on His glorious return. The hope of the church isn’t prosperity, healing, comfortable lives or success. Our blessed hope is the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ! (Titus 2:13).

Hold loosely the things you enjoy along the journey. Live. But live with your heart burning with a passion for laying your eyes on the One who loves you completely.

“Even so, come Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20b). {eoa}

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