



January 26, 2024

Not During the Winter

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

We're almost finished with the first month on the Roman calendar. I hope it won't seem like the longest month to many of God's brethren here in the Northern Hemisphere, in enduring cold winter weather! January has been more brutal than December for many.

We read last time the instructions by Jesus to His disciples about praying that their flight from Jerusalem would *not take place during the winter!* Judea did not and does not experience below zero Fahrenheit temperatures, but the winters can be relatively cold and rainy. It is interesting to consider what Jesus said.

It also seems to indicate that the timing of some of the events at the time of the end time are not set in stone as some would teach even today. This fits in with the instructions to be vigilant and watching! I had speculated last time about whether the destruction of a possible future Temple would take place on the same date as the destruction of the Temple of Solomon and the Herodian Temple. That could be possible and what could vary might be when the armies show up and surround Jerusalem and then when they take action. The events that built up to the destruction in 70 A.D. took some time.

Matthew's account of the Olivet Prophecy records the warnings made by Jesus about deceivers, deception, and signs and wonders. (Matthew 24:24) The actions of the false prophet come to mind. "*He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he*

deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast . . ." (Revelation 13:13-14)

Jesus cautioned about being taken in by some claiming that Christ had come when He did not yet come. Folks always love prophecy as I mentioned last time. Some dwell on it and latch on to it with fervor. How they might live as a Christian, well that is a different story. But, they are an "expert" on understanding prophecy and all its events.

Over the last decades, we have seen many, even Sabbath keeping people, claiming an exact date when Christ would come, or that they were one of the two witnesses, etc. (Matthew 24:23-26) In my years of serving God's children I have met several who claimed "to be one of the two witnesses". One time comes to mind where a man talking to me on the Sabbath at services claimed to be both. I asked him if he was schizophrenic.

Jesus said, regarding "*that day and hour*" of His coming, that "*no one knows.*" We understand that the Festival of Trumpets anticipates the blowing of seven trumpets that culminate with Christ's return to the earth and the resurrection of the saints. (Matthew 24:30-31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16) We are not told when the first trumpet will sound and when the seventh trumpet will sound. I believe that the first trumpet will sound on the Festival of Trumpets, but no one knows exactly when the seventh trumpet will sound. That is only a guess. This would fit in though with the typology of the Feast of Trumpets and also with not knowing the day of Christ's coming.

Matthew 24 continues to give examples of life going on and the surprise circumstances of Christ's return. "*For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*" (Matthew 24:38-39) It is amazing how humans can cope with a "normal" that is very difficult and trying but can go on living their lives the best they can. Jesus goes on to state *two* more times "*Watch*

therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming." (Matthew 24:42, 44) In v.44 Jesus directs His comments to the disciples, "Therefore you also be ready." Jesus goes on to encourage the disciples to be mindful of the needs of others and not give in to cynicism and self-indulgence. It's also important to not latch on to prophecy and become unbalanced. Yes, there will be surprises, but if His disciples know the Scriptures and are discerning of the events around them, it appears that they can make a move to safety before it is too late.

A number of details need to be in place to know we are close to that time.

We can't look to just one event. Christ did say that the disciples who are watching and discerning will know when Christ's return is near. *"So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place."* (Matthew 24:33-34) The word "near" is connected to a "generation" - not to a day or an hour. We shouldn't sound the alarm prematurely and be accused of being some type of "Chicken Little"! We do need to watch geopolitical conditions and more importantly, we need to watch and assess our own spiritual condition and how we are living with Him in us. More next time...

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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