

Jack Michael Outreach Ministries

A Ministry of the Watchman on the Walls, preparing God's People for the End Times

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Word from the Watchman...

Signs of the End Times – Part 1

Here in the early part of 2019, I believe the Lord has impressed upon me to teach a series entitled: **SIGNS OF THE END TIMES**. Of course, we are specifically referring to signs, which point to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. How soon this monumental event will take place, we do not know; but I believe we are living in the End Times!

The events of the End Times could be labeled as **SCARY**. Indeed, they will be scary for those who do not know the Lord. They could even be frightening for Christians if they fail to **LIVE BY FAITH** in the last days. Therefore, my emphasis in this series will be to teach God's People how to live by faith in the midst of troublesome times.

I will use Matthew 24:1-3 as our Foundational Scriptures:

*"Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them: Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down. Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying: Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be **THE SIGN OF YOUR COMING**, and of the end of the age?" (NKJV).*

From the above Scriptures, we can see that the disciples asked Jesus two specific questions...

- 1) **QUESTION #1** – When will these things be? They were inquiring about the Old Testament Temple. When will it be that not one stone shall be left here upon another?
- 2) **QUESTION #2** – What will be **THE SIGN OF YOUR COMING**, and of the end of the age?

Question #1 was answered in 70AD, when the Jews revolted against Rome. The Roman Army, under the command of Titus (son of the Emperor, Vespasian), marched on Jerusalem and crushed the rebellion. In the process of putting down the revolt, the Temple was destroyed.

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Question #2 will be answered beginning in this Teaching Letter, and continuing in the coming months. We will study the prophetic words of Jesus, and also other Scriptures pertaining to the last days. As we will see, these passages of Scripture are increasingly coming to pass before our very eyes during these End Times in which we are now living.

Signs of the End Times – **DECEPTION:**

When the disciples asked: “...**what will be the sign of your coming...**?” the first thing Jesus told them was: **BEWARE OF DECEPTION:**

*“And Jesus answered and said to them: Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying: **I AM THE CHRIST** (the anointed one, the chosen one, the Messiah), and will deceive many.” (Matthew 24:4-5).*

Of course, deception already permeates our society. We have slanted news, fear tactics preying upon the vulnerable, and deliberate lying. Yet, when Jesus warned about deception, he had a specific emphasis:

*“For false christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect – if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. So if anyone tells you: there he is, out in the desert, do not go out; or, here he is, in the inner rooms, **DO NOT BELIEVE IT.**” (Matthew 24:24-26 NIV).*

Teacher's Notes:

In Matthew 24:26 (above ↑), Jesus gives specific warnings about how to avoid deception: “...if anyone tells you: there he is, **OUT IN THE DESERT**, do not go out; or, here he is, **IN THE INNER ROOMS**, do not believe it.”

Many cult groups - whose leaders claim to be the Messiah, the Christ, or the true representative of God - are notorious for creating communities, which isolate themselves from the rest of society. They create these isolationist communities under the guise of maintaining sanctification, and religious purity. In reality, they separate their disciples from society so they will hear no other voice than that of the cult leader. In the process, these false christs (or, false prophets) create fear among their followers, and demand unnatural devotion.

There is no other Messiah; there is no other Savior. God confirmed this fact through the Prophet, Isaiah:

*“You are My witnesses, says the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides Me there is no **SAVIOR.**” (Isaiah 43:10-11 NKJV).*

Answering a Question from the Bible

When Christians die, do angels carry us to Heaven ?

From my understanding, under the Old Covenant (or, Old Testament), the departed Saints of God temporarily dwelt in a place called Paradise (see Luke 23:39-43), until they were resurrected with Jesus:

*And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves **AFTER HIS RESURRECTION**, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” (Matthew 27:52-53 NKJV).*

Also, pertaining to the resurrection of Jesus, and his ascension into Heaven, Ephesians 4:8 tells us:

“...When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train...” (NIV); (or, we could say: He transferred the redeemed Old Testament Saints to His own presence).

This temporary place of departed souls was also called Abraham’s Bosom. Listen to this familiar Bible story from the book of Luke:

*“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was **CARRIED BY THE ANGELS** to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.” (Luke 16:19-22 NKJV).*

Notice that Lazarus was carried to Abraham’s Bosom (or, Paradise) by angels! There is no mention of angels being involved when the rich man died. Sadly, it just says he died, and was buried.

Also, from Matthew 24:29-31 (below ↓), we know that when Jesus returns, angels will be sent out to **GATHER TOGETHER** his elect:

*“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will **GATHER TOGETHER** His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (NKJV).*

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NOTE: Mark 13:24-27 – a portion of Scripture similar to Matthew 24:29-31 – says the angels will gather together the elect of God: “...from the farthest part of **EARTH** to the farthest part of heaven.”

Teacher's Notes:

Sometimes, people say the **ELECT** referred to in the previous Scriptures are Jews, who are saved during the Great Tribulation. The Bible disagrees with such reasoning. Listen to 1 Peter 2:9-10:

*"But you are a **CHOSEN** generation (or, an **ELECT** generation - same word), a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; **WHO ONCE WERE NOT A PEOPLE** (who once were not of Israel; the original chosen people) *but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*" (NKJV).*

Very clearly, according to the Bible, the **ELECT**, or **CHOSEN**, is referring to everyone - whether Jew or Gentile - who has accepted Jesus Christ as Savior.

Getting back to our subject, we know that under the Old Covenant the angels carried Lazarus (and, apparently, all of the Old Testament Saints) to the place called Paradise (or, Abraham's Bosom). And, we know that the Lord Jesus Christ – at his Second Coming – will send out his angels to gather together his elect from all over the earth. But, what about right now, prior to the Second Coming of Jesus?

I have heard testimonies from Christians, who sat by the bedside of a loved one when they passed away. Just before their last breath, that loved one said they saw radiant men (or, radiant beings), dressed in white, standing beside their bed; beings which no one else could see.

Unbelievers would probably dismiss the matter, and say something like: *"Grandma got crazy before she died. She started hallucinating, and seeing things which were not there."*

But, I have heard Christians say: *"We believe Grandma saw angels just before she died. Maybe they came to escort her to Heaven!"*

I believe we can safely conclude that angels do indeed come to carry us to Heaven when we die. And, that is a comforting thought!

To the contrary – early in my ministry – an Oriental Lady came to our church, and urgently, and eagerly prayed to receive Jesus Christ. When I questioned her on the matter, she told me her Mother had recently died. She said her Mother died in great fear, clutching her idols.