Glen Park Gospel Church

Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev. Chris Trinham | Things to Come No 9 | 11th June 2002

Coming; Ready or Not

Scripture Reading: Matthew 24.32-25.46

Key Verse: *" And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that reads it For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."*
Habakuk 2.2&3

This verse from Habakuk relates to a prophecy God gave concerning the political and religious affairs of Judah toward the end of their kingdom. We use it today because it characterises the value God places upon His prophetic word. He expects our appropriate response. Let us keep it in mind as we conclude this series.

Jesus, after answering the questions of the disciples concerning the destruction of the temple, the end of the age and the coming of the Lord in His kingdom, told some parables to emphasise the need to prepare for that day. This last study revisits these parables.

A parable is a story which tells a truth. Most often it tells us what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. See for example, Matthew 13.31-5, although the formula used in these verses is not usually used. Categorised as an extended simile it has rules to help us interpret and understand it correctly. One of these rules is that a parable has only one main point of comparison. To force it to teach more is to risk confusion and miss that principal point which Jesus was trying to impress upon His hearers. What is the main point of each parable, and how do they join together instruct us about the Kingdom of God?

It should be noted that Matthew wrote for the Jewish mind and one technique he employed was to group his material topically. Thus following his telling of the prophecy of Jesus concerning their future we find a number of parables which also teach aspects of the coming Kingdom, and our response to His warnings. We note also that the principal hearers were the disciples, then all believers in their time.

The Parable of the Fig Tree.
Matthew 24.32-35.
The Group - That generation. v34.
The Lesson - Be Aware. v33.

The Parable of the Thief.
Matthew 24.36-44.
The Group - The reader. v44.
The Lesson - Be Alert. v44

The Parable of the Servant.
Matthew 24.45.51.
The Group - Faithful Servants. v45
The Lesson - Be Active. v46.

The Parable of the Virgins.
Matthew 25.1-13
The Group - Those looking for His coming. v1.
The Lesson -.Be Astute. v4.

The Parable of the Talents
Matthew 25.14-30
The Group - Stewards. v14.
The Lesson - Be Adventurous. v27.

The Parable of the Sheep and Goats
Matthew 25.36-46
The Group - The Nations. v32.
The Lesson - Be Altruistic. v40.

Here then are six ways in which we can be ready for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. They provide for us six principles for action: six things we can build into a program for our lives, so that when He does come, should it be in our life time we will be ready. We can turn these principles into six questions to ask our selves:

Am I aware of what the Bible teaches about the time of His coming, and can I relate what is occurring in the world?
Am I looking and longing for His coming?
Is there oil in my lamp? Does my life glow with the fire of the Holy Spirit?
When Jesus comes will He find me active for the Him in the place where He has placed me?
On the day of assessment, how will I account for my stewardship: will the Lord be pleased with the result of my work?
This parable is addressed to the nations. But on the personal level, what are we doing in our small corner, and with the resources that God has entrusted to us?

The answers we personally provide for each, if we are honest, will highlight those areas of our individual walk with the Lord which may want some corrective action.

In this series of studies, there may be questions which not have been answered. Some cannot be answered because we do not yet have all the information. The day will reveal it. The topic is vast and we have only touched on it. There are those which may only be answered through your own personal study. Our aim has not been to answer all the questions, as much at encourage you be looking for and be ready for the coming of the Lord. In conclusion, read 1 John 3.2&3.

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church
Lower Road, Eltham North
Sundays 10.30 am

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