

In this week's notes, we will mirror our current Sunday evening sermon series on Christ's end-times teaching. This can be a very complicated and divisive topic. May the Lord bless and enable us to grasp *the unchangeable constants which are to be our anchor, no matter what period of the Last Days in which we find ourselves.*

Monday: Read Matthew 24:1-2 and Romans 9:1-5

Christ the Constant

We see Christ's heart for the lost reflected in the Apostle Paul *as a key constant that promises us stability in unstable times.* In other words, if we remember that Christ through His Apostles saves the lost in every age, we will not fear so much an unknown future. Whatever happens will further God's Gospel purposes!

For example, see Paul's heart full of grief concerning his own people Israel in Romans 9:1-5. They rejected God's saving righteousness in favor of their own works-righteousness according to Romans 9:32. The ugliest manifestation of this rejection of God's way of salvation is Israel's cruel rejection of God's Son, "the Prince of true, divine righteousness."

In insisting that Jesus be crucified and the murderer Barabbas released (Luke 23:18-19) the Jews in general and Jerusalem in particular sealed their doom a few short decades after Christ's crucifixion. In AD 70, the Roman army came as a direct result of God's promise to destroy the city because of their killing of His Son. This is what Jesus refers to in Matthew 24:2 when He says that "not one stone would be left upon another." The temple officials who drove Jesus out of the temple would see their adored temple destroyed forever.

Meditate and Pray: Lord Jesus, you say that the reason Jerusalem rejected you is because they "did not recognize the Day of their visitation" (Luke 19:44). Please help us so that we never fail to see when you draw near into our lives. Moreover, if the only way in which you can draw near and visit us (because of our daily sins and failures) is in afflicting grace, then send the affliction. We would rather suffer the loss of all things; we would rather have our hearts be broken, than to be allowed to wander away from you and to lose our first love, awash in a life of carnal success, wealth and spiritual forgetfulness. Amen.

Tues/Weds: Read Matthew 24:3 & Daniel 12:1-13

Divine Patience, in Planning and Explaining

The Twelve ask Jesus a two-fold question in Matthew 24:3. The first is, "When will these things be?" They are asking about the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem that Jesus had alluded to. The second is, "What will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the ages?" Here they are asking when he will set up an earthly kingdom of David, as the Jews of that day longed for, promised throughout the Old Testament.

Jesus patiently perceives their misunderstanding and seeks to clarify that these are two different events that the disciples are asking about; both true, but not one and the same.

To illustrate: think of a telescope, which at once focuses on the nearer surroundings, the Fall of Jerusalem, for example, but then, with a turn of the wrist, focuses on the farthest point on the horizon.

Just so, the Holy Spirit can inspire New Testament writers to write about the fall of Jerusalem in one verse and then focus on the long-term reality of Christ's return. Both kinds of judgment occur throughout history, and both occur in Matthew 24.

Moreover, these pressing questions have a long Old Testament history. About 500 years before Jesus, the prophet Daniel predicted that at the end of all time (Daniel 12:2-3) men would arise at the Last Resurrection to either everlasting life or to everlasting contempt. This is the Last Judgment. But Daniel also had it revealed to him that there would be an *earlier judgment against God's people Israel*. This earlier judgment under the Romans would be unheard of in its cruelty and suffering (Daniel 12:1) and would literally smash the power of God's holy people Israel (Daniel 12:7) when they saw their temple and city burn (AD 70).

Meditate and Pray: Thank you, Lord, for the accuracy of your Word. Thank you that down to the very year and day you planned Christ's first coming to earth as the Son of Man. You also planned the terrible day of judgment in A.D. 70 as a prelude to that final day of Judgment *when all who reject Christ* will suffer the same terrible fate of eternal judgment. Please cause us to be watchful and expectant for the coming of that great Day. Help us to look forward to seeing the extent of your saving grace to us in Christ when we behold His return to take us to heaven. Amen.

Sing about this in hymn # 545:

1 When this passing world is done,
when has sunk yon glaring sun,
when we stand with Christ in glory,
looking o'er life's finished story,
then, Lord, shall I fully know,
not till then, how much I owe.

2 When I hear the wicked call
on the rocks and hills to fall,
when I see them start and shrink
on the fiery deluge brink,
then, Lord, shall I fully know,
not till then, how much I owe.

3 When I stand before the throne,
dressed in beauty not my own,
when I see thee as thou art,
love thee with unsinning heart,
then, Lord, shall I fully know,
not till then, how much I owe.

4 When the praise of heav'n I hear,
loud as thunders to the ear,
loud as many waters' noise,
sweet as harp's melodious voice,
then, Lord, shall I fully know, not till then, how
much I owe.

5 Chosen not for good in me,
wakened up from wrath to flee,
hidden in the Savior's side,
by the Spirit sanctified,
teach me, Lord, on earth to show,
by my love, how much I owe.

Thurs/Fri/Sat/Sun: Read Matthew 24:4-22 and Luke 21:7-9**Resting in His Dominion**

There are many different opinions in Christ's church as to how different prophesied events will be fulfilled at the time of Christ's Return. The Disciples were alarmed and confused as they cried out to Jesus, "When will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?" (Luke 21:7-9) And also, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3) We may also wonder when Christ will return, and what signs are we to look for as proof that His coming draws nigh.

In answer to our fears and concerns about Last Things, remember these fundamental, unchangeable facts about Christ's reign and His commitment to protect His church. In one sense, all that matters as we with trepidation view the future, is to know that Christ *will defeat all His and our enemies* and that *no one can snatch His church out of His hand*.

May the Lord Jesus calm us in this evil day with this list describing unchangeable truths. Enjoy looking up the references to these fixed and immovable truths in our uncertain lives.

CHRIST'S ABSOLUTE DOMINION OVER ALL THINGS

- 1) Christ alone is the absolute potentate; the highest on the earth are in subordination unto Him. Such an exalted place he was ordained to take up, (Psalm 89:27). And accordingly He is
 - Made Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev. 17:14; 19:16; 1 Tim 6:15).
 - He exercises dominion answerable to His title (Rev. 6:14-17; 17:14; 19:16-20; Ps 2:8-9; Isa. 60; Micah 5:7-9.)
- 2) Christ as King has total rights in every age to send His gospel into all nations in the world, commanding that all worship Him (Matt 28:19; Ps 2:9-12); none of the rulers or governors of the world have any right to refuse or to oppose this Gospel, nor can do so, but to their utmost peril.
- 3) All kingdoms shall at length be brought into a professed subjection to Him and His gospel and have all their rule disposed of unto the interest of His church and saints (Dan. 7:27; Isaiah 60:12; Rev. 19:16-19).

Taken from comments on Hebrews 1:1-2, John Owen, p 86 of volume III

Meditate and Pray: There can be no more appropriate way to end this week's Bible notes than to remind ourselves of some of the great hymn lyrics describing Christ's rule:

(Red Trinity Hymnal, selected verses from, respectively, #'s 578; 316 & 318)

1 The Son of God goes forth to war,
 a kingly crown to gain;
 his blood-red banner streams afar:
 who follows in his train?
 Who best can drink his cup of woe,
 triumphant over pain,
 who patient bears his cross below,
 he follows in his train.

1 The mighty God, the Lord,
 hath spoken unto all;
 from rising to the setting sun,
 he unto earth doth call.
 From Zion, his own hill,
 where perfect beauty dwells,
 Jehovah hath his glory shown,
 in brightness that excels.

1 Lo! he comes, with clouds descending,
 once for favored sinners slain;
 thousand thousand saints attending
 swell the triumph of his train.
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 God appears on earth to reign.

4 Now Redemption, long expected,
 see in solemn pomp appear!
 All his saints, by man rejected,
 now shall meet him in the air.
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 See the day of God appear!

2 The martyr first, whose eagle eye
 could pierce beyond the grave,
 who saw his Master in the sky,
 and called on him to save;
 like him, with pardon on his tongue
 in midst of mortal pain,
 he prayed for them that did the wrong: who
 follows in his train?

2 Our God shall surely come,
 and silence shall not keep;
 before him fire shall waste, and storms
 tempestuous round him sweep.
 He to the heav'ns above
 shall then send forth his call,
 and likewise to the earth, that he
 may judge his people all.

2 Ev'ry eye shall now behold him,
 robed in dreadful majesty;
 those who set at naught and sold him,
 pierced, and nailed him to the tree,
 deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
 shall the true Messiah see.

5 Yea, amen! let all adore thee,
 high on thine eternal throne;
 Savior, take the pow'r and glory,
 claim the kingdom for thine own:
 O come quickly, O come quickly;
 alleluia! come, Lord, come.