

THE MIDNIGHT CRY

TEXT: Mathew 25:1-13

Introduction:

1. For nearly 2000 years now, Christians have been looking for the Lord to return.
2. The Bible gives us many signs that the Lord will return very soon (cf. Matt. 24:3-8).
3. Luke's account is slightly different from Mathew's. Our Lord said in Luke 21:9, "But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by."
4. And our Lord said in Luke 17:29 and 30, "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."
5. The days preceding the second coming of Christ will be like the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. This surely sounds like our day.
6. Homosexual activists are in a rage because California voters voted against so called "gay marriage." Many of them are attacking and vandalizing churches. And the police will not do anything about it.
7. Thank God, the Bible says our Lord is coming back (Matt. 24:27-30).
8. Sometime, when this spiritually blind, sin-loving, pleasure-mad world least expects it, the "Midnight Cry" will ring out: "Behold, the bridegroom cometh! Go ye out to meet him!" (Matt. 25:6).

I. THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING

1. The doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ is taught all the way through the Bible. There are 260 chapters and 7,959 verses in the New Testament in which the return of Christ is mentioned 318 times, an average of once every twenty-five verses.
2. Consider the testimony of our Lord Himself. He spoke of His second coming many times (cf. Mathew 16:27; 23:39; 24:27, 30, 31, 37-39, 42-44; 26:64; John 14:1-3).
3. Consider the testimony of the angels. While the amazed apostles were standing on the Mount of Olives, watching their Lord depart into Heaven, two men (angels) “stood by them in white apparel.” “Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:10,11).
4. Consider the testimony of the apostle Paul. Paul wrote, “So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 1:7, 8).
5. In his instructions regarding the Lord’s Supper, Paul wrote, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come” (I Corinthians 11:26).
6. Paul referred to the second coming of Christ in all of his epistles. It is the great theme of I & II Thessalonians.
7. Consider the testimony of the apostle James. He wrote, “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter

rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:7, 8).

8. Consider the testimony of Peter. He wrote and preached often on the second coming of Christ. In his second epistle, the entire third chapter deals with this great theme.
9. Consider the testimony of the apostle John. John wrote, “And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming” (I John 2:28).
10. And, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (I John 3:2).
11. Consider the testimony of Jude, the half-brother of our Lord. He wrote, “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints” (Jude 14).

II. CONFUSION REGARDING THE SECOND COMING

1. The second coming of Christ is clearly taught throughout the Bible – both in the OT and the NT. Nevertheless many are confused over this important doctrine.
2. The worldly crowd flat out rejects the second coming of Christ – just as they reject everything the Bible has to say about sin, salvation, judgment, heaven and hell, etc.
3. Instead of humbly submitting themselves to the Word of God, ungodly men attack the Bible, and they teach doctrines of devils in their place – evolution, humanism, purgatory, reincarnation, new age teachings, homosexuality, etc.

4. In addition to this outright denial of the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, the devil has also sought to pervert the teaching of God's Word concerning it.
5. One popular error being disseminated today is called "preterism." This strange theory argues that all Bible prophecy has already been fulfilled. It teaches that nothing remains on God's prophetic calendar. According to preterism, events like the rapture, the rise of the Antichrist, and the coming seven-year tribulation, all took place around 70 AD, the year the Romans invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the second Temple.
6. Hank Hanegraaff, the so-called "Bible answer man" is now teaching this nonsense. According to Mr. Hanegraaff, the Great Tribulation took place when the Roman emperor Nero persecuted the early church.
7. The book of the Revelation was written at least 25 years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and it always speaks of the second coming of Christ as future (cf. Rev. 1:7; 22:10, 12, 20).
8. Revelation 6-18 describes the tribulation in great detail. These Scriptures speak of one third of the stars falling from the sky, one third of the population being wiped out, the third part of the sea becoming blood; and the third part of the creatures in the sea dying, etc.
9. Certainly, these events did not literally occur at AD 70. Therefore, the only way to maintain the preterist view is to allegorize these scriptures.
10. The Bible teaches that the rapture is imminent (I Cor. 1:7; 15:51, 52; Phil. 3:20; 4:5; I Thess. 1:10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; James 5:7-9; I John 2:28; Rev. 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20).

11. In other words, the rapture will take place suddenly, at any time. There are no prophecies that need to be fulfilled before the rapture.
12. Therefore, it will be pre-tribulational. The Bible teaches quite clearly that the second coming of Christ will occur in two “stages.” In the first stage, our Lord will come for His church before the tribulation begins. In the second stage, He will come with His church at the close of the tribulation.
13. Some people teach “mid-tribulational” view. Others teach the rapture will be “post-tribulational.”
14. But the Bible clearly refutes both these positions, and teaches that Christ will return for His church before the tribulation begins.
15. We hold to the pre-tribulation view for several reasons.
16. The believer’s deliverance is a deliverance from all divine wrath. “Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Roman 5:9).
17. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. 1:13).
18. “And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (I Thes. 1:10).
19. “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thes. 5:9).
20. There can be no question about the fact that the tribulation will be a time of pouring out of divine wrath upon the earth. This is explicitly stated throughout the Bible.

21. “Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it” (Isaiah 13:9).
22. Zephaniah 1:15 describes the coming tribulation as a time when God will pour out His wrath upon the world. “That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.”
23. Revelation 6 says, the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man will try to hide from “the wrath of the Lamb.”
24. Then Revelation 6:17 says, “For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”
25. A pastor friend of mine teaches the church will go through most of the tribulation. I asked him how he explains the clear teachings of Scripture that God has delivered us from His wrath.
26. He replied that we will be delivered from the wrath of God, but not the wrath of man (the antichrist, etc.).
27. In my opinion, that is a ridiculous position (cf. Rev. 6:12-17).
28. Let us consider the promise to the church of Philadelphia (Rev. 3:10). This promise guarantees that the church will be taken out before the tribulation begins.
29. Note: the promise concerns exemption “from” not protection “in” the hour.

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III. LESSONS FROM THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS (MATT. 25:1-10).

1. The key word is “ready” (25:10; cf. 24:42-44; 25:13).
2. Being ready means being wise (Matt. 25:1, 2).
3. In outward appearance the wise and foolish virgins were alike – the difference was not external, but internal.
4. These foolish virgins had some feelings of attachment to Christ; they “took their lamps” and went out to meet Him (25:1), but they “took no oil with them” (25:3).
5. In the Bible, oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The foolish virgins “took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps” (25:3, 4).
6. Today, the Lord is up yonder in heaven and none of us knows when He will return. Too many Christians are getting complacent and lazy and weak and drowsy and sleepy. Our Lord says, “They all slumbered and slept” (25:5).
7. Jesus is coming back and you need to make sure you have oil in your lamp. It is close to midnight. Soon we will hear the shout: “Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him” (25:6).
8. Have you ever wondered how the military salute originated? Back in 1588, Philip II, the king of Spain tried to invade England. He had long been trying to overthrow Queen Elizabeth because she was a strong Protestant and Philip was a staunch RC. King Philip sent the Spanish Armada to England in 1588. This fleet consisted of about 130 ships with about 8,000 sailors and 19,000 infantry.
9. The Spanish Armada reached the Strait of Dover and anchored off the coast of France. But God in His providence sent a strong wind, forcing the Spanish right into the English fleet. The English sunk many of their ships and many others received a severe battering. Out of the 130 ships, only 80 made it back to Spain, and with less than half the men on

board (over 13,000 men were either missing or dead! This was the hand of God!)

10. On the other hand, England lost no ships and fewer than 100 men.

After this magnificent victory, a naval tournament was arranged for the British seamen. Sir Francis Drake, the English captain, invited Queen Elizabeth to come from London to award prizes for the occasion. The officer in charge of arrangements issued orders that, "On account of the dazzling loveliness of Her Majesty, all men, upon receiving their prizes, should shield their eyes with their right hand."

11. As dazzling as Queen Elizabeth was – can you imagine how dazzling it will be when the Lord Jesus Christ returns? (cf. Rev. 1:13-18)

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CONCLUSION:

1. Soon the door will be shut (Matt. 25:10).
2. Then it will be too late for many people. The door of heaven will be shut in their face. The door of forgiveness, the door of mercy, the door of grace, the door of hope, the door of eternal life, the door of repentance, the door of salvation – this door will be shut and they will be shut out (Matt. 25:10-13).
3. Let us stop for a moment and consider: Who are these foolish virgins that are left out? Who are these sad characters in danger of this great calamity? Some of them are religious impostors – the pretenders who went along with the religious crowd but were never genuinely born again.

4. Some are the procrastinators – the fence-straddlers who keep putting off salvation. One of these days they will go and try to get some oil for their lamp – but then it will be too late and the door will be shut in their face!
5. Remember, Jesus said: “But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37). In Genesis 7:16, the Bible says “the LORD shut him in.”
6. Beloved – when the Lord shuts you in, you are in. And when the Lord shuts you out – you are out!
7. After the rain started falling, all of Noah’s neighbors were probably banging on the door of the ark, but it was too late. The door was shut! “The LORD shut him in.”
8. There are unsaved husbands hoping to get to heaven on their wives’ apron strings and unsaved children hoping to get in with their saved moms and dads. But the door to heaven will be shut and they will not be able to get in (Matt. 25:10-13).
9. The great evangelist George Whitefield was preaching in Scotland and two young men were joking and fooling around during his message. A Christian lady was sitting next to them and was greatly annoyed at their foolishness.

10. Whitefield was preaching from this same text I am preaching from this

morning. One of the rude fellows said to his friend, “Who cares if the door is shut? Another one will open!”

11. Whitefield was quite a distance from these two young men and could not

have possibly heard what they were saying. But he paused for a moment and said: “It is possible there may be some careless, trifling person here today, who may be thinking, ‘Who cares if the door be shut? Another will open.’ The two young men were shocked and looked at each other.

12. Whitefield proceeded: “Yes, another will open. And I will tell you what door it will be: it will be the door to hell!”

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