

God's Three End Time Purposes (Part 2)



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by Derek Prince

Now, let me point out one other fact about this kingdom and then we're going to come to the actual process of establishing the kingdom. In Psalm 92:5–7 the psalmist deals with an issue which is very current. It's the arise of the wicked.

Why does God permit this? Does God care? This is what the psalmist says in Psalm 92:5–7:

> "O Lord, how great are your works. Your thoughts are very deep. A senseless man does not know, nor does a fool understand this. When the wicked spring up like the grass and when all the workers of iniquity flourish, it is that they may be destroyed forever."

So God permits iniquity to flourish. He permits a tremendous harvest of iniquity and it's taking place in the world today. But His purpose is to destroy them all.

I don't suppose there's many of us here that are not concerned at some time about flagrant injustice and wickedness in places of power. Well, God's answer is, "I'm letting them grow up but one day they'll all be mown down by my judgment."

Now I want to speak about the three main purposes that God has to be fulfilled before this kingdom can be established. We'll turn to Matthew 24, this is the great prophetic discourse that Jesus gave from the Mount of Olives overlooking the temple area. It's recorded in three gospels: in Matthew 24, Luke 21 and Mark 13. There's slight differences of emphasis, it's like if what I'm saying were to be photographed by video cameras there could be three different cameras, all of them taking the same message but from different angles. We'll turn to Matthew 24. Jesus was asked a question, verse 3:

> "What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

Not a sign or the signs but the sign. And in the following verses He gave a specific answer. But before He gave the

sign He gave a number of signs which were signs but not the sign. We'll not look at them all but we'll go down to verse 7, Jesus says:

> "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines, pestilences and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pangs."

The establishment of God's kingdom is going to come by a birth. It cannot be organized, it can only come by a birth. That's true for every individual who enters the kingdom of God, he has to be born again. There is no other way. It's true for the whole earth. For the kingdom of God to come there has to be a birth. And as you all know, a birth is preceded by labor pains. When you are aware of the labor pains and when they become more intense and more frequent you know the birth is near at hand.

I believe we are in the period of the labor pains of the birth of the kingdom of God on earth.

These are the labor pains that Jesus described in verse 7. He said nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. The word nation in Greek is ethnos. It's the word which gives us ethnic. What He's speaking about is ethnic conflict. And that is one of the most conspicuous features of the present situation in the world, and it's increasing. Personally, I believe it will continue to increase.

Kingdom against kingdom is more political wars like World War I and World War II.

Now we're going on and the key word in Matthew 24 is "then" which occurs nine times altogether. In other words, it's a series of situations that develop, one after the other.

After it says all these are the beginning of birth pangs, verse 9 says:

> "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake."

I've often asked Christian groups, "Who is you? Who is you? You is us." Is that right? That's not good English. Have you realized that fact? Those words are addressed to followers of Jesus. So, in this time of birth pangs they will deliver you up to tribulation, will kill you and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

Verse 10:

> "Then many will be offended, will betray one another and will hate one another."

Again, that's Christians. Many Christians will give up their faith in the face of the persecution and to save themselves they will betray their fellow believers. This has been happening in the Soviet Union and in China probably for one or two generations. But it's going to become far more widespread.

Verse 11:

> "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many."

The greatest single danger that confronts us as Christians in the present time is not persecution, it's deception. Jesus warned us against deception more than He warned us against anything else. I say to each of you, if you say it couldn't happen to me it probably will happen to you. If your attitude is "I couldn't be deceived," you're a candidate for deception. I have learned by many years of experience the only thing that can keep us faithful is not our cleverness, our knowledge of scripture, our ministry gifts, our status; it's the mercy of God. Paul said, "I give my opinion as one who has obtained mercy of the Lord to be found faithful." I regularly acknowledge to God, "God, if I am to remain faithful it will be by your mercy and your mercy only. Not by my cleverness, not by the languages I know, not by the scriptures I can quote, not by the past experience of ministry, but only by your mercy."

And then it says in verse 12:

> "Because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold."

The Greek word for love there is that famous word agape. It means primarily the love of Christians. Love of many Christians will grow cold. Why? Because lawlessness abounds.

Looking back over the last 20, 30 years of American history, would you say lawlessness is abounding? Has abounded more and more and more until, as a matter of fact, really there is no force that can contain the lawlessness in this nation. People blame the police but the police can only maintain law and order if the majority of citizens are law abiding citizens. When that comes to an end there is no way

to maintain law.

And the result will be unless we're on our guard that in this atmosphere of lawlessness our love will grow cold. Then Jesus says in verse 13:

> "But he who endures to the end shall be saved."

Actually the Greek is more specific. It says he who has endured to the end will be saved. You're saved now. To remain saved you have to endure to the end. Otherwise you will not be saved.

That's a pretty grim picture. But the next verse is astonishing, it's so paradoxical. You would expect that Jesus would say in that situation hide yourself, keep out of sight, do everything you can to protect yourself and your family. Don't become conspicuous. Maybe you'll make your way through. Actually He says the exact opposite. In the light of this situation here is the sign. Previously we looked at signs, now we look at the sign.

> "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached [or proclaimed] in all the world as a witness to all the nations and then the end will come."

What is the final, conclusive sign? The proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom in all nations.

That is not a popular message. It says in Acts 17 about the apostles in Corinth, the enemies criticized them and they summed up their message this way. First of all they said, "These people have turned the world upside down." And then they said, "These all say there is another King, one Jesus." That was how the unbelievers summed up the message. I want to ask you, is that how unbelievers would sum up the message of the gospel as we proclaim it today?

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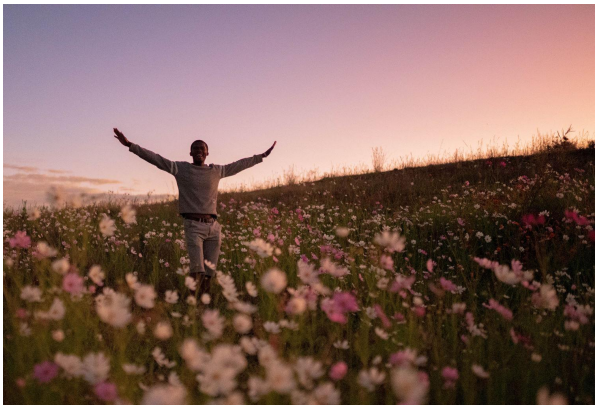
Transcript: TS-R191-102-ENG
Last Updated: 12 Apr 2023
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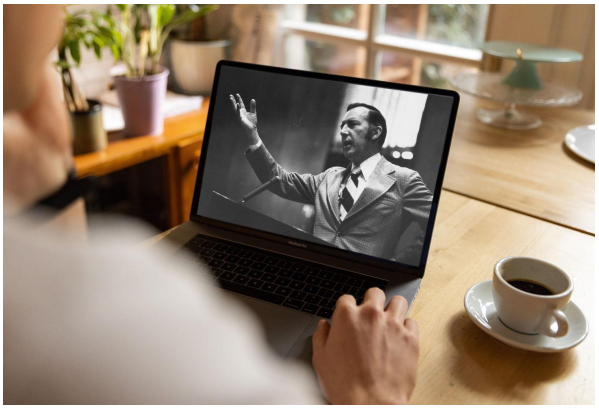
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