

Wars And Rumors Of Wars

Matthew 24:3-6

I listened to the President's speech this past week, and I heard his new approach to the war in Iraq. Will it work? I don't know, but I do know this even if the war in Iraq is brought to an end, another will crop up somewhere else. War will always be with us in the human sense until Jesus returns and sets up the 1,000 year reign.

He told us in Matthew 24:3-6

(3) And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

(4) And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

(5) For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

(6) And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Wars and rumors of wars must come to pass. I don't remember a time in my life that there was not talk of war of some kind of another. There has not been a time in history that a war was not going on somewhere on this globe. It seems to be the lot of mankind.

This propensity towards wars have not changed one iota over the years. Sure the weapons have changed. We no longer beat each other in the head with a rock such as Cain did to Able.

We no longer fight with swords such as they did in the days of King David.

We don't even used simple guns and bullets as they did in the revolution of this country.

We now use sophisticated weaponry such as smart bombs and laser directed bullets. We have remotely piloted planes that fires missiles many miles and destroy enemies we have never seen.

We have even greatly improved combat medicine. When a soldier is wounded, he is immediately removed from the battlefield to a sophisticated field hospital where he receives the best of care. War has never been so exotic and exciting.

There is one thing that hasn't changed since the beginning; people are still getting killed – some combatants and lots of noncombatants. Women, children, the elderly, the innocent, they all suffer in the war zone, not to mention suffering of the families of those who are wounded or killed.

This message is not to make you feel guilty about wars, for there isn't not much you and I can do about it for they are inevitable. They are going to happen because there will always be someone who wants to rule and control others.

Perhaps you think it would be better if the whole world converted to the Christian faith. I can tell you now it wouldn't be better, in fact it might be worse. We are studying church history on Wednesday nights, and we will soon learn that more people died at the hands of Christians than of all the wars in history.

Suppose this was a Christian nation, do you know what would happen? The Episcopalians would attack the Lutherans, the Methodists would attack the Baptists, the Catholics would attach all of them and so on. Every Christian organization would vie to be the ruling power.

Wars and rumors of wars Jesus said. There can be no peace on this earth because humankind is so human and Satan can affect the thinking of even the most devout among us. Let us not forget that all wars and destruction starts and ends Satan.

Some of us have never experience a fighting war. I was in the military for 30 years and never heard the first shot fired. Many may think I know nothing about warfare, but I have been fighting the war of the faith all my life, and you have too, for the war that Satan wages against God and all the children of God is all out war that is fought with no restraint. He uses ever method ever devised to win the battles and it seems that in today's world that he is willing the war. God tells us what to do and how to be prepared for battle in Ephesians 6:11-12:

(11) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

(12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

You see, the war we are fighting is not of flesh and blood, but is full spiritual combat. It is something we try to ignore, but can't seem to get totally away from it.

We humans have a great capacity to deny uncomfortable situations. If they don't affect us personally, we can rationalist them away. We sit in our living rooms and see people getting killed in Afghanistan and Iraq, but we don't know them, it is on TV and we accept this as more Hollywood special effects. In other words it is easy to deny something we can't see and experience first hand.

The Spiritual war we are engaged in is like that. You can't see Satan and his demons, so you ignore them. It is kind of like the way our Government ignored the terrorist threat until the attack on the World Trade Center. They now know we have a treat, but can't find the enemy, so they look in the places they expect them to be to only find out they aren't there.

We do the same thing in regards to Satan's war on God's people. We go along in our self proclaimed bliss, and then disaster strikes. We then realize there really is a Satan and there really is a need for God's power, until it is well behind us and then we get complacent again.

This is further complicated because there are no distinct lines drawn between God's world and Satan's world. We can no longer distinguish sin from sinful, good from bad, right from wrong or even sinful behavior from Christian behavior. We are complacent, confused, and spiritual defeated.

A survey was recently conducted among a select number of churches and their pastors. The question was asked of the members, "Is God number one in your life?" You know how many said He was –15 percent. The asked the pastors how many of their members placed God number one in their lives, and the answer was 70 percent.

Only 15 percent of the people put God first, but they all expected God's blessings. There are two conclusions we can draw from this survey; the people are not only fooling themselves, they are also fooling the pastor.

If we ever expect to win the war on Satan we have to get armed with the power of God and quit playing Christian. Professing Christians have to put God first in their lives, and pastors have to quit making excuses for the sinful behaviors of the people. We have got to learn anew how to call sin, sin, and shy away from sinful behavior. We have to fully realize that the time is coming when we must stand before the judgment seat of God and He will judge us according to our works, deeds, and thoughts.

The Bible is clear on this. Here is what it says in Galatians 6:7-8

(7) Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

(8) For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

It also says in 2 Corinthians 5:10:

(10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Wars will end, judgment will come, and many will be surprised as Saddam Hussein was when he was hanged. He felt invulnerable as the ruler of Iraq, he waged wars and committed atrocities, but he had to finally face the music.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that there will be a final war. There will be peace on this earth, but man won't win the war, nor bring peace for Jesus Himself will do it. Here it is in Revelation 19:11-21

(11) And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

(12) His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

(13) And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

(14) And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

(15) And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

(16) And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

(17) And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

(18) That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

(19) And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

(20) And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

(21) And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

The war to end all wars; followed by peace such as the world has never known since the Garden of Eden. This is known as the millennium reign of Christ. This is the time when the lion shall lay down by the lamb. This the time when Jesus Himself shall rule the earth and Satan will be bound for 1,000 years. You see the point here, no Satan, no war. When Jesus reigns there is only peace.

We can have that kind of peace here on earth now individually if we let Him have total control of our lives. I talking here about spiritual peace and contentment that only Jesus brings.

It is the kind of strength that allows one to stand firm when the world around him is going all to pieces.

It is the kind of strength than allows one to accept the irregularities of life.

It is the kind of strength that allows one to stand proud in the face of diversity and say with Paul:

“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

We are engaged in warfare every day of our lives. We have a few defenses as defined in Ephesians 6:13-18

(13) Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

(14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

(15) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

(16) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

(17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

(18) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

Loins girt with the truth

The breastplate of righteousness

Always having the shield of faith

Helmet of salvation

Fortified with spiritual prayer and supplication

Kept alert by the perseverance of the saints

Jesus will win the war, but you and I must fight the battles of the centuries.

We must put God first in our lives.

We must know how to use the Sword of the Lord, the Bible, to defeat Satan and his crowd.

We must fight to keep our church pure and undefiled.

We must be fully trained, ready, and available for spiritual combat when God calls on us.

He only uses those who are prepared to fight the war.

He never sends those who are unfit, untrained, unprepared, unarmed, or who just don't want to be a part of the battle.

God Gave His best for us by sending Jesus, His only begotten Son.

He demands the best of us because He is God and deserves the best we have to offer.

We should be willing to give Him our best because this is what we owe Him for being concerned about us.

If we got what we deserve, we'd all go to hell, but because God has intervened, we can have eternal life.

If we are truly going to be soldiers in God's army, we must enlist, we must give Him and Him alone our allegiance, and we must be willing to fight to the death.

Where do you stand on the war against God?

Are you a spectator, or a combatant?

Are you prepared, or are you letting someone else fight your battles?

Are you committed to the cause, or are you along for the ride?

God knows where you stand.

Jesus knows where you stand.

The Holy Spirit knows where you stand, and He has spoken to some of you this morning.

Will you listen to His voice, get things right with God, and get on the front lines in the war?

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