

Increasing Division & Conflict Between the Spiritual Kingdoms

The Future, Session 8

Follow-up to Previous Session

- Article about genetically modified foods needed to combat crop failures
 - “Pests and diseases destroy up to 30 percent of global crops. From bananas and tomatoes to wheat, rice and potatoes, a surprising number of common foods are in peril.”
 - In 1997, U.S. citrus growers harvested 244 million boxes of fruit; projections for 2018: 46 million; less than 20% of the harvest 21 years ago due to pests & diseases
- When Jesus began describing the beginning of birth pains, he warned about deception, including great signs & miracles, false Christs
 - What should we do when we see obvious widespread deception?
 - How will our spiritual authority be relevant to deception?
 - How should we prepare ourselves now for widespread deception?
- Jesus then warned about wars & violence; also listed in Seals & Trumpets
 - What should we do as wars & violence become increasingly widespread?
 - How will our spiritual authority be relevant to wars & violence?
 - How should we prepare ourselves now?
- Jesus warned about famines, earthquakes, fearful events, great signs from heaven & plagues; the Seals & Trumpets also describe same kinds of events
 - What should we do as these events become increasingly widespread?
 - How will our spiritual authority be relevant?
 - How should we prepare ourselves now?

Increasing Division & Conflict Between the Spiritual Kingdoms

- Revival/awakening will be followed by flood of perversion
- The barrier between the physical & spiritual realms is about to tear, allowing beings from each realm to have greater access to the other
- God will release a flood of holiness, will affect Christians simultaneously around the world
- Satan will respond to the awakening with an overwhelming flood of perversion that non-Christians & immature Christians won't be able to resist
- The battle between the kingdoms is reaching a climax that will erupt throughout the world & the heavens, producing the events of the last days

Increasing Righteousness

- Righteousness (Gk, n, *dikaiosyne*): morality compatible with God's character; a "right standing" that meets God's requirements
- 2 Co 3:18, "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."
 - "reflect" (Gk, v, *katoptrizo*): to gaze at something as in a mirror
 - Did Jesus meet God's standard for righteousness?
 - Do we become increasingly righteous as we become increasingly like Jesus?
- 2 Pet 1:8, "For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- How might a spiritual awakening/revival affect our level of righteousness?
- How might world conditions affect our progress in becoming more righteous?

Increasing Wickedness

- Ro 6:19(b), "Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness"
- Eph 4:19, "... they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more."
- Result of Increased Wickedness: Increased Deception
 - Mt 24:11, "... many false prophets will appear and deceive many people."
 - 2 Tim 3:13, "... while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."
 - 1 Tim 4:2, "Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron."
 - "have been seared as with a hot iron" (Gk, v, *kausteriazō*): branded, seared (unfeeling, unresponsive, callous)
- Result of Increased Wickedness: Nature Affected
 - Ro 8:19-22
 - ¹⁹ The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.
 - ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

- Result of Increased Wickedness: Persecution
 - Mt 24:9, “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.”
 - 2 Tim 3:12, “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”
 - As people become increasingly wicked, how will their perception of Christians change?
- Result of Increased Wickedness: Apostasy
 - Mt 24:10-12, ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold
 - v 10, “turn away” (Gk, v, *skandalizo*): to disbelieve permanently or finally, conceived of as stumbling and falling down
 - 1 Tim 4:1, “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.”
 - “abandon” (Gk, v, *aphistemi*): abandon, fall away, forsake, turn away, rebel
 - What might cause a lot of Christians to abandon the faith?
 - Mt 24:12: as wickedness increases, the *agape* of most will grow cold
- Result of Increased Wickedness: Purification of Saints
 - As we see the total devastation evil produces, we’ll be so repulsed by it we’ll gladly submit to the purifying work of Holy Spirit
 - What should we do when we see increased wickedness?
 - How will our spiritual authority be relevant?
 - How should we prepare ourselves now?
- Despite Increased Wickedness: Gospel Spread Worldwide
 - Will occur by end of Great Distress/Tribulation
 - Then the end will come

Day of the Lord: God’s Wrath

- Rev 16:2, 1st bowl, “... ugly & painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image.”
- v 3, 2nd bowl, the sea “turned into blood like that of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea died.”
- v 4, 3rd bowl, “the rivers and springs of water ... became blood.”
- vv 8-9, ⁸ “The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was given power to scorch people with fire. ⁹ They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.”
- How did people react after these four plagues, “bowls” of God’s wrath?

- vv 10-11, ¹⁰ “The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their tongues in agony ¹¹ and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.”
 - Ex 10:21, “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt – darkness that can be felt.’”
 - How did people react to this expression of God’s wrath?
- vv 12-14, 6th bowl: Euphrates River dried up; demonic spirits performed miraculous signs & gathered world’s armies for battle
- Rev 16:15, “Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.”
 - What does this represent and when does it happen?
- v 16, “Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.”
 - What does this reveal about world leadership’s attitude?
- vv 17-21

¹⁷ The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, “It is done!” ¹⁸ Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. ¹⁹ The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰ Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. ²¹ From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.

 - How did people react to this plague, expression of God’s wrath?
- What could possibly cause people to react like that, even after experiencing God’s wrath?