

# **RUMINATIONS OF A FORMER HEATHEN**

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**End of the World**

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How close are we to the end of the world? There is always somebody on Christian radio or TV talking about the end of the world and the signs that are appearing. And, of course, the words of Jesus in Matthew 24 are used often by those who wave the return of Jesus as a spur for repentance. When Jesus was asked about the signs of his coming and of the end of the world, he said in Matthew 24, among other things, that there will be wars and rumours of war, nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. And then they take the newspaper and point to the famines, and diseases, and wars and disasters across the world and say, see?, these are the signs that Christ is coming at any moment. But you can take a newspaper of today, or a newspaper of 40, 50, 60, 70 years ago, or from the Middle Ages if they would've had newspapers, and it will tell you the same things. Disasters and famines and wars have been with the human race for a long time.

What Jesus also said, mixed with his remarks about the wars and rumors of war, was, see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet, . . . all these are the beginnings of sorrows. So, if the wars and rumours of war, etc., are not yet the signs of the end, what are the signs? Jesus said this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come. This last statement is difficult to gauge because from the very beginning of what is now called "Christianity" the good news that The Christ had come and had died for our sins and that he had proved it by coming back from the dead was broadcast in every country that had been absorbed by the Roman Empire and every other place where Jews lived. The gospel of the kingdom went out immediately all over by the witnesses of the resurrection who were thousands upon thousands of Jews (generic for Israelites) that had come to that Passover when our Jesus was crucified. In more recent times the gospel has been taken by very tough and hardy missionaries into the remotest parts of the earth.

Today, with satellite communications, Internet and other technologies, the world is pretty much covered, so, by that measure the end could come at any time. Jesus also mentioned that the time of the end would be as it was in the times of Noah (Matthew 38: 39), when people were buying and selling marrying and giving in marriage, and many other activities. It would be a time when the busy-ness of

the world would be in full gear, everyone living their lives completely unaware of the impending demise. That's how it is right now. The stock market, celebrities gossip, the price of gasoline, have everyone's attention. The other remarkable thing at the of Noah and the reason for the Flood was the great wickedness of men. If there is one sign one could point to as an indication that the end of the world may be near, that sign could probably be the increasing wickedness and violence of men. And I do mean *men*, the gender. Every day, murders and terrible brutalities committed by men are on display in the news. Women have their own wickedness, but not nearly in the same measure. Women do not steal children to rape, kill and dismember as men do. Women don't generally have the violence inside them that men have. Naturally, man, he being the stronger, cannot be stopped. It is true that these crimes have existed for a long time, but not as widespread as they are today. World-wide children's pornography rings, sex tours where men go to some of the poorest countries on the world to have sex with children. Right here in the U.S. children are taken from neighbourhood parks, snatched from their front yards, taken from their very bedrooms. Predators and random violence are everywhere. And the wickedness and violence of men are probably very close to what they were at the time of Noah. Genesis chapter 6: verses 5, and 11 to 13:

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the Earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.” “And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.” “And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”

The present day wickedness of men certainly could be a sign of the end times. Man is no worse than he is only because the Holy Spirit has restrained him. But we know that in the last days the Holy Spirit will withdraw his restraint from the spirit of man and wickedness will really cut loose, which is what appears to be happening now. The problem with focusing on the return of Christ or the rapture or the end of the world is that it gives the impression that if one can figure out what the signs are that will precede these events one would have enough time to prepare, that is, mend your ways before the end comes. Don't worry, you'll have a little bit of time, somebody will blow a trumpet, there will be an announcement and you'll have five minutes to repent, just before death comes. But lots of people have died waiting for the end of the world or the rapture. The trouble with that kind of thinking is that you don't know when you are going to die. There may be no announcement and there may be no five minutes. Did the bird know that in that very day it was going to be caught in the net of the fowler? Death and eternity is what we must be prepared for. The mantle of Christ is what we need, tightly

wrapped around us every minute of every day. We cannot wait for the end of the world, our death will be the end of the world for us. God's assurance that Christ is all we need is our comfort.