



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. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. 9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.* (Matt 24:4-13)

The Lord spares no words in telling us what to expect upon the earth in the latter days. He is direct and frank in His warning of what to look for in the world prior to His Coming again. Much of His summary of warnings are already transpiring. The only factors that remain to be settled is to what extent do these things occur and in what celerity of occurrence. Let us take the warnings of today's text in order.

Take heed that no man deceive you. Why would our Lord warn us to take heed that no man deceive us? Do we seek divine and spiritual guidance from self-proclaimed workers of evil? No! We seek spiritual teaching from men we trust in both the active ministry and in lay teaching, but primarily from the Word itself. It is these very men that Christ makes reference to for it is those who pretend to know exactly when Christ will return and some, even, proclaim themselves to have the power and nature of Christ. *For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.* Notice Christ does not use the word 'some' but 'MANY.' If you would like to meet these scoundrels, simply turn on the TV to any of these apostate ministers begging for money and filthy lucre in return for empty promises of healing and prosperity. This is not speculation – it is a prophetic declaration of our Lord.

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. After every general conflagration of war, the soothsayers will proclaim the end at hand; however, the increasing prevalence of war around the globe is only the precursor of the end. Those who market in sensationalism are ready to proclaim every wicked figure that arises and every war that occurs as evidence of antichrist. But we have had antichrist with us from the earliest history of the Church. How do we distinguish antichrist from all others?

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? HE IS ANTICHRIST, THAT DENIETH THE FATHER AND THE SON. 23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. (1 John 2:18-23)

Well, then, from that clearly worded text, we may look around and find many in our midst today who qualify for the label of antichrist – the so-called politico-socio-economic ‘religion’ of Islam, Jehovah Witnesses, the eastern religions, etc. But, I do believe that we shall have the hybrid antichrist arise in the coming days if his ascent is not already in progress – 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. (2 Thess 2:3-4) I will not be surprised to learn that this antichrist may be predisposed to the abhorrent sin of homosexuality! Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. Dan 11:37 (KJV) Both Dr. Adam Clarke and John Newton ascribe this to the Roman and Greek churches proscribing their ministers to marry. But I believe this high apostate to be a product of the modern proclivity to exalt homosexual marriage.

Regardless how much we feel secure behind our unwallied cities, there is coming a time of intense tribulation brought on by our own sinful inclinations and disregard for the God whose Providence oversaw our founding as a nation (in America). We feel that the great beheadings and murders that predominate on some foreign shores can never reach our homeland, but that is a great error in understanding God’s dealing with man. Because we have known God, and turned away, our judgment will be greater. 7 *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.* 8 *All these are the beginning of sorrows.* When we observe these events happening, as we currently do, it is not the final hurt, but only the **BEGINNING OF SORROWS.**

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. Those who have the courage to maintain their Christian testimony in the face of this firestorm of persecution may suffer the same martyrdom we witnessed at the godless hands of the Islamic State of Syria (ISIS). I am awed at the courage of one ten year old boy who refused to renounce the Lord Jesus Christ and suffered beheading by the muslims because of it. There were many others, too. Do our pulpit dandies of today possess that courage?

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. Why do we observe a great decline in love of family and our fellow man in our world today? Do not tell me it has always been thus for I am old enough to remember times when neighbors cared for neighbors and women and men would never lift a cruel hand against their own children. But today, America alone has murdered more innocents in their mother’s womb than all of the men lost in all wars combined prosecuted by the American military forces. This exceeds the evil of Adolph Hitler’s crematoriums. But why does the love of many wax cold?

Iniquity abounds today to a greater extent than ever in the history of our nation, and it is increasing at an alarming rate. We even unwisely invite immigrants into our country whose values and morals are far different from those which have characterized the American people these many years from our first founding as a nation. We shun those immigrants who are suffering persecution as Christians and, instead, favor those whose depraved religion has never been conducive to a freedom loving people.

What does it mean when Christ says that *the love of many shall wax cold*? Cold is not a value – like darkness, it is a total absence of value. Darkness is not a value, it is simply the absence of light which does bear a value and force. Hate is the absence of love – it is cold and unmerciful. Many among us stopped loving a long time ago, and now there is only a coldness of character and emotion left in our hearts. We are conditioned to accept the murder of mass numbers of innocents, and few will be as the village Hampden to which Thomas Gray refers in his great poem, Ellegy Written in a Country Churchyard:

*Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.*

We have this endearing promise of our Lord: *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved*. This last phrase does not mean that some whom the Holy Ghost has drawn scratching and screaming to Christ will be lost, for all the Father has placed in His hand He will hold secure; but those of vain faith who are mere poseurs were truly not saved from the beginning. Those who belong to God KNOW it beyond any doubt. So rest secure in your salvation even in tremulous times. Only LOVE will get us past the spiraling path to destruction. *If ye love me, keep my commandments*. (John 14:15) Let your obedience to God be evidence of your salvation if you will *endure to the end*.