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Jesus Answers the Disciples' Questions

(MATT. 24)

THE BACKGROUND FOR THE TEACHING

There is much speculation concerning the second coming of Christ today, which is due partly as a result of misunderstanding the teaching of Jesus in Matt. 24; Mark 13:1-37 and Luke 21:5-36. If you are interested in a study of this subject and wish to devote some time to an understanding of it, then read the Scriptures carefully first and become familiar with them. In Matt. 24:3, the disciples asked Christ three questions. This was a result of one of the disciples pointing out to Jesus the stones in the temple buildings. The Jews were very proud of these buildings, even though they were not as splendid as the temple which Solomon built. Jesus tells this disciple (Mark 13:1-2) that the time will come when not one stone will be left upon another. Later, Peter, Andrew, James, and John (Mark 13:3) came to Jesus privately and asked him, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled", Mark 13:4. In Luke 21:7, Luke records the questions as, "But when shall these be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass"? Mark and Luke give only two questions. When will the stones fall one from the other, and what sign will there be to tell them when the time was near? In Matthew 24:3, the questions are different, "Tell us, when shall these things be? (the destruction of the temple, GVP) and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world"? As the second coming of Christ and the end of the world will be the same time, there are really only two questions here; when will Jerusalem and the temple be destroyed and what will be the sign of the end of the world?

THE APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING

In order to understand the teaching of Jesus, we first must take in consideration the questions to be answered. To know when one question is answered and the answer to the other begins. Due to the fact that the second coming of Christ is not

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"Let No Man Despise Thy Youth"

A RESPONSIBILITY

The title of this article is taken from the words of Paul, 1 Tim. 4:12, and was written to a young man to instruct him in his manner of conduct as he taught and influenced his hearers. During the riots in the colleges a few years ago, it was determined that only about one percent of all college students were involved in these riots, yet all college students suffered from the conduct of a few. This is not right, but it is the world in which we live. So the students who were not involved had a grave responsibility to prove to the world that the riots were not a result of a certain age, or because they were in college. On the other hand, were unfortunate enough to have their "bad apples" as well as all other age groups and vocations. Their conduct was such that they are no longer "depised" because they are youth!

DRESS AND LIFE STYLE

The many groups of young people who have followed the anarchy trail have dressed in such a way that even the dress has become a symbol of the anarchist! Their hair and their clothes stereotype them as against 'the system'. They have no respect for the laws of God, the laws of the land, or the rights of others! Even before they have spoken, or done anything, their "badge" tells the world that they are anarchist! Like a police officer who wears a badge to tell all, along with his uniform., that he is FOR law and order. The hippy says by his "badge" that he is against law and order! Therefore he will prejudice the minds of those who see him and they will greet him with a closed mind.

PAUL AND TIMOTHY

The Jews would not listen to an uncircumcised Gentile, regardless of how fine a man he was. Peter would not even go to the home of Cornelius, a devout man, one who feared God, prayed and

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The Necessity of a Child-Like Attitude

By Tommy Palmer

There is an age old adage that throbs in the world like a continual heart-beat, and can be felt throughout the history of mankind. This is known as "world standards". These are a set of man-made rules, whereby man has the legality to grab all he can, without regard for the other fellow. It is more literally the old adage of "dog-eat-dog".

When Jesus Christ came into the world He began to teach a New set of values. This new set of values was designed to change man, creating in him the desire not to grab for self. This was complete reversal of man's set of values and service.

In life it is all a question of where a man's aims are centered. If his aims are centered on the fulfillment of a personal ambition, the acquisition of personal power, the enjoyment of personal prestige, or the exaltation of self, then he is aiming at precisely the opposite of the Kingdom of Heaven. To be a citizen of the Kingdom means a complete forgetting of self, the spending of self in a life which aims at service and not at power. So long as man considers himself as the most important thing in the world, his back is turned from the Kingdom. If he wants to reach the Kingdom of Heaven, he must turn around and face in that direction.

Many times we find an attitude of selfishness, personal gain, and personal profit. The disciples of Jesus heard His discourse concerning the Kingdom of Heaven and the new emphasis upon living standards, yet they asked a question still lingering with worldly value, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" (Matt. 18:1 RSV). Jesus answered, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:3).

Usually, a child has four great qualities which make him the symbol of those who are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. HUMILITY—A child does not wish to push himself forward; rather, he is content to be left in obscurity. A child is one who is content in staying where he is, rather than invading the world with an attitude of self.

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Jesus Answers (Con't.)

under consideration in Mark 13 & Luke 21, we may conclude that all that is said pertains to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and does not deal with the end of time. So in an effort to understand the matter it is safe to accept as much of Matt. 24 which parallels Mark 13:1-37 and Luke 21:5-36, as pertaining to the question of when the temple was to be destroyed and not the second coming of Christ and the end of the world! Read this again and think about it! There is some figurative language in these Scriptures and we must consider them so in order to understand the meaning.

THE MISUNDERSTANDING

The real problem then is to know what part of Matthew 24 pertains to the destruction of the temple and what part to the second coming of Christ and the end of the world. When is the first question answered and when does the answer to the second begin? There are some things said which some people can see only the second coming of Christ contained in such passages. Let us observe some of these. Matt. 24:14 it is stated that "the gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world", before the temple was destroyed, Paul said about six or eight years before the temple was destroyed, in A.D. 70, that "the gospel had come unto all the world", and preached to "every creature under heaven", Col. 1:6, 23. Verse 15, is a fulfillment of Daniel 9:26-27; 11:31; 12:11.

Glynn V. Purdy

Let each one strive to know God's will - not man's.

All the Food Is Not Poisoned

We are sometimes reluctant to instruct anyone whom we feel is doing his best to serve the Lord. Perhaps we should be less critical of one's heart and more helpful in a constructive way when we become aware of someone entertaining doctrinal error. Nevertheless, we can instruct others in the way of truth and allow God's word, rather than our tongues, to do the penetrating (Heb. 4:12). It is often easier to knife someone with sarcasm and dogmatism than to nurture prayerfully and in love.

The danger in fellowshipping everyone whose hearts we "think" are sincere lies not only in the possibility of our misunderstanding the hearts of others, but more in the acceptance of their honest and sincere error. Being sincere never has and never will make one's doctrine true. Even so, we can be found embracing those in error by thinking, "Well, there is so much truth in what they are teaching and so little blatant error, and besides, who am I to doubt their sincerity?" This writer has often felt similarly about certain individuals. Consider the fallacy in this type of reasoning.

If you were at the grocery store and found on sale, certain contaminated food, what would you think? Your first impression might be to contact the Food and Drug Administration immediately. While this thought is still in mind, the grocer approaches with this sales pitch: "We are having this sale because we have been informed that part of our inventory has been contaminated with food poisoning. Rather than wasting this food entirely, we are passing it on to you at a savings. Don't be worried, there is a lot of good food that has not been poisoned. We just don't know which has and which hasn't. If you are unlucky and happen to purchase some contaminated food, chances are that there won't be much poison present. If you should become sick or die, we will be more than happy to refund the purchase price."

What would your reaction be? Would you grab all the food you could at this bargain price? Sounds silly, doesn't it? But, this is exactly what we are doing with "spiritual food" when we knowingly fellowship those who are entertaining error, regardless of whether they are doing so consciously (Acts 17:30). This attitude reminds me of the old clock that wouldn't run. It was right twice every day. God's word is right 24 hours a day and it must be the final authority concerning Christian fellowship or any other doctrinal area.

—Steven C. Goad

A Message From a Friend:

I am writing this letter to encourage you. I believe that EVERYBODY OUGHT TO LOVE THE BIBLE. Everybody ought to read the Bible. Everybody. It is God's Word. It holds the Solution of Life. It tells about the Best Friend mankind ever had, the Noblest, Kindest, Truest Man that ever trod this earth.

It is the Most Beautiful Story ever told. It is the Best Guide to human conduct ever known. It gives a Meaning, and a Glow, and a Joy, and a Victory, and a Destiny, and a Glory, to Life elsewhere unknown.

There is nothing in history, or in literature, that in any wise compares with the simple annals of the Man of Galilee, who spent His days and nights ministering to the Suffering, teaching Human Kindness, Dying for Human Sin, Rising to Life that Shall Never End, and promising Eternal Security and Eternal Happiness to all who will come to Him.

Most people, in their serious moods, must have some wonderment in their minds as to how things are going to stack up when the End comes. Laugh it off, toss it aside, as we may, THAT DAY WILL COME. And THEN WHAT. Well, it is the Bible that has the answer. And an unmistakable answer it is. There is a God. There is a Heaven. There is a Hell. There is a Saviour. There will be a Day of Judgment. Happy the man, who, in the days of his flesh, makes his peace with the Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible, and gets himself ready for the Final Take-Off.

How can any thoughtful person keep his heart from warming up to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Book that tells about Him. Everybody ought to love the Bible. Everybody. EVERYBODY.

The preacher teaches, though he must solicit his own classes. He heals, though without pills or knife. He is sometimes a lawyer, often a social worker, something of an editor, a bit of a philosopher and entertainer; a salesman, a decorative piece for public functions, and he is supposed to be a scholar. He visits the sick, marries people, buries the dead, labors to console those who sorrow and to admonish those who sin, and tries to stay sweet when chided for not doing his duty. He plans programs, appoints committees when he can get them; spends considerable time in keeping people out of each other's hair; between times he prepares sermons and preaches on Sunday to those who don't happen to have any other engagement.

Then on Monday he smiles when some jovial chap roars, "What a job . . . one day a week!"

—Anonymous

LET NO MAN (Con't.)

helped the poor, and was a just man, because he was not circumcised! This was not right and very unfair to Cornelius, but it was the way of the Jew. So Paul had Timothy circumcised to remove this wall of prejudice that the Jew would listen and learn of the true character of Timothy. An uncircumcised Gentile would "turn off" a Jew before he even listened to the man. So today, the hippy hair and dress, will "turn off" the law abiding citizen without a "hearing" on the part of the hippy! This is not right, but it is a fact.

IN WAR

During World War II, if a fine American soldier had appeared in the camp of the American Army, wearing a German uniform and carrying a gun, he would have been shot on sight! Not because he was not loyal to the good ole USA, but because he was dressed in the "symbol" of the enemy! If he was not the enemy, then why dress as if he were? A good question and it deserves a good answer, an honest one!

THE CHRISTIAN YOUTH TODAY

The Christian youth today has a very grave responsibility to dress and conduct himself in such a manner that no man will "despise" youth. On the contrary, he is to be an example and give heed to doctrine that he might save himself and others, 1 Tim. 4:12, 14. If the Spirit of Christ is dwelling in him, then why wear the "uniform of the enemy? If he is not an anarchist, why wear the "uniform" of the anarchist? He brings reproach on the church, he causes others to stumble and to close their minds to what he says and does and this is sinful. 1 Cor. 10:32; 2 Cor. 6:3. If we are not with the enemy then why wear his "uniform" and pretend to be?

Glynn V. Purdy

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What Can Be Done?

The headlines of the nation's newspapers are filled with ominous threats and frightful forebodings of fierce disaster. Nuclear threats are being tossed around like harmless playthings. Annihilation is discussed in the same breath as the migratory habits of the adult cotton boll-weevil, and with little more emotion. Murder, theft, rape, and assault are daily occurrences in our nation and city.

What can be done about it? Some people think the solution is in passing laws. The statue books are filled with new laws but crime has gone up at the same time. Laws are more successful in prescribing punishment than in preventing lawlessness.

Some people feel that it will go away if it is just ignored. They turn their backs and pretend that it just isn't happening. Still, crime goes up. Wars and the threat of wars still stare us in the face. A cancer cannot be cured by being ignored.

Some people crack under the pressure and enter into a little dream world where all is beauty and peace. These, however, are of no use to themselves nor to society. They have not removed themselves from the danger. Should the threats ever become a reality they would suffer just as much and die just as quickly as if they had maintained sanity and lived sound, sensible, useful lives.

Still others view the situation and live by the philosophy, "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow you may die." They live degraded lives of debauchery and lasciviousness. They "pull the stopper" and their lives urn down the drain to the animal level. They become no better than beasts. Such as this do not help cure the problem. They become a part of it, being a burden to society. They are liability, making no useful contribution to the world.

We return, them to our question—what can be done about it? Are we simply to despair? Are we to feel that it is useless? Certainly not! Here is what we can do—hear Peter: "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" 1 Peter 3:10-13.

Here is God's answer to today's problems. Serve God. "But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake; happy are ye; and

Baptized at What Age?

"How old should a person be when he is baptized?" This question has often been asked by sincere people. In giving answer, it must be said that the question cannot be answered in terms of years. We are not even told in the Bible just what is the approximate age of accountability.

The Bible tells us that we must hear the gospel before being baptized. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them" (Matthew 28:19). "When they believed Philip's preaching . . . they were baptized" (Acts 8:12).

One must believe before he can be baptized "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). "What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" (Acts 8:36-37).

Repentance is essential before baptism. "Repent, and be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

And the faith that is in the heart of the one to be baptized must be confessed. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father" (Matthew 10:32). "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).

Infants cannot be scripturally baptized. Neither can any other person who has not been taught, who has not believed, who has not repented, who has not confessed Christ. He who is capable of these acts is capable of being baptized scripturally. This is the important thing—not the number of years a person has lived.

—Raymond Keley

" . . . he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God . . ." Daniel 6:10.

A tourist spending the night in a small northeastern town joined several natives sitting on the porch of a general store. After several futile attempts to start a conversation, he finally asked, "Is there a law against talking in this town?"

"No law against it," answered one of the men, "but there's an understanding no ones to speak unless he is sure he can improve on the silence". Hmmm! Might make for a lot of silence.

be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts . . ." 1 Peter 3:14, 15a.

Jess Hall, Jr.

The Necessity (Con't.)

2. TRUSTING—A small child has a 100% trust that his parents will supply all his needs. Likewise, the true Christian must possess a 100% trust in God.

3. DEPENDENCE—To the child a state of dependence is perfectly natural. He never thinks that he can face life by himself, and for himself. He is perfectly content to be utterly dependent on those who love and care for him. If Christians would put their dependence in God, they could enjoy new strength and a new peace.

4. ALWAYS READY—The child is always ready to learn NEW things. He never insists that he knows all there is to know about life. His mind is always centered upon learning new truth. The true Christian is a Truth-Seeker.

Jesus used an example of a child to convey a new set of standards to the world. Whenever man realizes that these standards are the Correct standards, and changes his attitude from self to the attitude of a little child, then he is the greatest in the Kingdom. Remember, "Truly I say to you, whoever does NOT receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it". (Mark 10:15 RSV).

Will God Blame You?

A little girl strolled into Sunday School one Sunday morning. Her hands were dirty, her dress was soiled, and there was a curious dirty ring around her mouth.

Her teacher asked how she had managed to get so dirty so early in the morning. The girl explained that she was on her way to Sunday School when a neighbor boy asked her to blow up his wading pool.

She blew and blew until she had enough air to make the rubber wall stand up. The boy picked up the water hose and began to fill the pool. The little girl then asked the boy why he didn't come to Sunday School with her. He told her, "No, I want to play in my pool."

Then with her blue eyes looking straight into the teacher's the little girl asked, "Do you know what I did? I pulled the stopper out of the air hole and let the pool go down, because if that boy didn't come to Sunday School I didn't want God to blame me for it."

As you consider the influence that your life has on others, could God ever blame you for their misconduct? Influence can become a very heavy burden.

COMMENTARY:

"GRUDGITIS" Killer Disease

"Fret not thyself because of evildoers . . . fret not thyself in wise to do evil . . . Wait on the Lord, and keep his way . . ." (Psalm 27:1, 8, 34).

A grizzly bear lumbered into a clearing where garbage had been dumped. Watching tourists noticed that there was only one animal the grizzly would permit to eat with him . . . a skunk! Doubtless he resented the skunk's brazen impudence. He could have easily won a fight with the two-tone intruder. But he didn't. Why? Because he knew the high cost of getting even!

Smart grizzly! Much smarter than the thousands of humans who spend weary days and sleepless nights brooding over resentments and inventing ways to "get even". Men never seem to learn the high cost of revenge!

Dr. S. I. McMillen insists that a disordered emotional life is a frequent cause of ulcerative colitis, toxic goiters, high blood pressure and scores of other diseases. If the truth were revealed thousands of death certificates would record that the victims died of "grudgitis." We've heard people say, through clinched teeth, "I'll get even with that bum if it's the last thing I ever do!" Often it is!

For centuries scoffers have ridiculed the advice of Jesus, "Love your enemies." Impractical! Idealistic! Absurd! Now psychiatrists are recommending it as a panacea for many of man's ills. When Jesus, the Great Physician, said, "Forgive seventy times seven," He prescribed good medication not only for our souls, but for our bodies too.

Booker T. Washington, who became famous in spite of prejudice against his color, was insulted times without number. But, he had the sense to say, "I will not let any man reduce my soul to the level of hatred."

The moment I start hating a man I become his slave, for he controls my thoughts. I can't escape his tyrannical grasp on my mind. He hounds me wherever I go. He may be many miles away, but he whips my thoughts into such frenzied frustration that my innerspring mattress becomes a torture rack. Every moment is filled with thoughts that fume like nitric acid and corrode as deeply. The Good Book advises:

" . . . off with anger, rage, malice, slander . . . be clothed with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and good temper — forbear and forgive each

"In the Beginning, God..."

" . . . the foolishness of God is wiser than men . . ." (I Corinthians 1:25).

To find out what really happened when the earth was created, a group of engineers spent weeks gathering information, checking and rechecking it, and feeding it into the great computer. The great moment came. All was complete. Everyone gathered around. A button was punched. The great computer whirled into action. Relays opened and closed. Lights flashed. Bells rang. Finally, a typed message emerged: "See Genesis 1:1."

Perhaps there is a serious thought from this humorous story. Modern man is under the indictment of being so smart he is often ignorant. In trying to be profound he is often provoking. Your Bible says it this way: "Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe." (I Corinthians 1:20, 21, RSV).

And yet we often fail to apply this lesson to our own lives. We prefer to point the finger of accusation at the agnostic who says if there is a God it does not matter, or at the atheist who claims no God. But are we any different? For instance, do you invoke God's blessings upon the activities of your every day . . . or do you try to "go it alone"? Do you try to rear your family without God's guidance? Do you try to engage in self-improvement without the guidance of God? In our computer age there is still no promise of man and machines like the promise of James 1:5.

Bob Mize

other . . . as Christ forgave you, so must you forgive. And above all you must be loving, for love is the link of the perfect life." (Colossians 3:8, 12, 12, 14 — Moffatt).

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