

On The Frontier

“For the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

The Reason For War

by Linus A. Mathis III

People have long looked for signs, especially regarding the end of the world. When queried on this matter, the Lord prefaced his response with the following:

Matthew 24:4b

. . . Take heed that no man deceive you.

Honestly speaking, it's always men that seek to deceive us. One would think "life's lessons" would testify strongly enough to make misanthropes of us all. Yet, as P.T. Barnum said (the owner of Barnum & Bailey Circus), "there's a sucker born every minute." Sometime in the early 1900's Mr. Barnum, failing to include himself as candidate for his humorous acumen, offered \$10,000 to anyone who could mislead or sucker him. Since he was always looking for new acts and interesting animals, he responded to a man who had written him claiming to possess a cherry-colored cat. He told this man that if the cat were truly cherry-colored he would indeed be delighted to put it on display. A few days later a crate marked "live animal" arrived for him. When he had opened it he found a frightened but otherwise normal looking black house cat inside. He also found a note which read: Maine cherries are black. There's a sucker born every minute. Although we don't know what became of the cat, we do know that P.T. sent the man a check for \$10,000. Maybe he kept it as a pet to remind him of the day he got

"suckered." Or perhaps he began to include himself among the number who can be duped, which would be all of humanity.

Whatever a man seeks zealously can cause him to become vulnerable among those who would deceive. Consequently, when it comes to seeking signs that herald the Coming of the Lord and the end of the world, men are tricked. How sad that the Lord's admonition is all but forgotten. The sensational rather than the rational tender the framework for the belief systems of many modern Christians. If the written Word of God were given Its rightful place, the ONLY rule for faith and practice, this could never be. But since God's Word rarely receives little more than mental assent, today's Christians are driven to and fro with every wind of doctrine. It's important that I make another point with you at this time. It's good to zealously desire the Lord's Return. We can never spend too much time craving the things of God. However, we MUST insist that the Bible be our ONLY source for Truth. Then and only then can we fervently follow after spiritual matters with the assurance that our conclusions will be right. Enthusiasm without correct knowledge can be very costly to us. Just ask Mr. Barnum. Having said that, please note that it's meaningful to be enthusiastic. Knowledge without enthusiasm will only lead to apathy. So, we need both and with the Word of God as our compass and map our course will be sure and straight.

The Lord's next statements are recorded for us and for as many generations as choose to believe them. How significant they are to us. They are as vital and relevant as if they were written this very day.

Matthew 24:5-7

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

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.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

History has marked many who have purported to be the Christ. Since there are some who yet await the Messiah's birth, room remains for even more impersonators of Christ. Once again we see that without the standard of the Written Word great opportunities exist for deception. I have seen Christ falsely represented on many an occasion. How about you? Perhaps you've also seen individual charades perpetrating the Saviour. Believe it or not, there are more on the horizon. How are we to know what is genuine and what is not? By the yardstick of God's Matchless Word.

The Lord Jesus warned that there would be wars and rumors of wars. He exhorted that we be not troubled,

for these things must come to pass, but he said, "the end is not yet." Why is it then, that Christianity today endeavors to gauge the Lord's Return by wars and rumors of wars? It seems to me also that, nations have risen against nation, and kingdoms against kingdom. There have been famines, pestilences and earthquakes in many places. In fact, for as long as I can remember it has been this way. I cannot recall a time where there wasn't a war somewhere or at least the threat of one. I have vivid childhood recollections of the fearful polio epidemic that took so many young lives. I've witnessed the rise of AIDS and seen far too many a newsreel of the starving peoples of the world. I'm certain that you too have borne witness to these and many, many more which I loath to mention. Now this is just in my brief life time. History will support numerous wars, diseases and famines. From the black plague to the great Irish famine to our own civil war and the two horrible world wars that cost so many their lives. The list is long and hard to read. We're all too aware of the presence of these things in our world. None of them are new really. They have been with human-kind since Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. It was then that sin, sickness and death entered. Since then it has progressively worsened. This should come as no surprise to those of us who know and love the Scriptures. God's Word is abundantly clear. Thankfully, we have been delivered from the ills this world produces.

II Peter 1:2-4

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

According as his divine power

hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped [to flee away from] the corruption [getting worse and worse] that is in the world through lust.

Being made partakers of the divine nature we have escaped the corruption of the world. Yes, this world is corrupting. It's decomposing like a dead body. When life leaves any biological entity the remaining vessel begins to decay. At no point does this decay, this decomposition, reverse itself. The world we live in is like that, it's corrupting. It's getting worse and worse all the time. But, God has rescued us. We have escaped! This passage is but one of many which informs the believer of the worsening state of the world and the deliverance that God has wrought for His saints. And the best is yet to come!!!

Revelation 21:1-5

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God

himself shall be with them, *and* be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

Isn't our God awesome! Why then would anyone want to disregard His Word and learn from current events via the news media? Should we trust the cable providers as a source of reference? Are you so confident in their integrity as to frame from their broadcasts a defining statement regarding the Lord's Return and the end of the world? I'm sorry to say that for many, world events speak much louder than the Gospel.

There's no question that the world is getting worse. But, we dare not allow our nation's foreign policies and presumptuous interventions into the affairs of other's define for us the Truth. The fact is, God isn't going to consult any diplomat or military leader before sending His Son back. He didn't ask any of them the first time He sent His Son and you can rest assured that breaking news stories never influence or alter His mind. As God He is THE Supreme Counsel and needs no advice or guidance from man. This may come as a surprise to some men but it's true nonetheless.

Romans 11:33-36

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of

God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

Isaiah 40:12-15

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or *being* his counsellor hath taught him?

With whom took he counsel, and *who* instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

Since the nations are but a drop in the bucket to our God, what they do must be even more insignificant. How foolish then to look to the world around us for truth and guidance. God alone must be consulted, especially when the Return of His Son is the question. Primarily God is

consulted through His Magnificent Word. Aren't we blessed to be able to avail ourselves so freely of Its contents!!!

The Lord Jesus is also credited with having said the following:

Matthew 24:35-39

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

If no man knows, then no man knows, end of story. That should be enough for any Bible believing saint. But, I'd like to add the reason for war to this equation. Once you understand why there are wars, the prospect of consulting the news media to gain spiritual insight will seem more absurd to you than ever.

James 4:1,2

From whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your lusts [*hedone* - desires for pleasures] that war in your members?

Ye lust [*epithumeo* - to covet after, over-desire for the possessions of others], and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

There it is! Could it be any plainer? The reason for war is lust. The Greek word for lust as found in verse one is the basis for the English word hedonism. A hedonist is the opposite of a puritan. He is one who engages in debauchery, excess and self-indulgence. The word translated lust in verse two is a word that indicates an over-desire or greed for things which belong to others, put them together and you have hellish motivation for war. In other words, those who desire to indulge themselves to this degree will stop at nothing to get what you have if they desire it. If that means war, so be it. Don't let them tell you any differently. The reason for war is lust. The Word says so, that settles it. How can you bomb someone for the sake of peace? Give me a break! Combine that thought with this:

I John 3:11-15

For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Hatred precedes murder. You don't murder someone if you don't first hate them. I told you that you'd find no further veracity in current events. Sorry, but someone has to be honest with you. You can't trust a murderer or a warmonger. They do what they do for their own selfish ends and have no concern for the welfare of others. The contrary exists, they are willing to lie, cheat, steal, do what ever it takes to gratify themselves. If that means the death of others, so be it. How can you look to the events orchestrated by that category of human for guidance? Yes, I know the Bible foretells of wicked events the magnitude of which we can hardly imagine. But, I also know that those who do wickedness are not known for being forthright. They are evasive liars and all that they do is deceitful. Remember what the Lord Jesus Christ said:

Matthew 24:4

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

This truth is found many times in the Word. There are those who set about to deceive us. This is not a new concept and should come as no surprise to us. The Adversary is the one who desires to confuse and mislead God's people. He is especially interested in promoting fear and destroying hope. These days we see too much fear and too little hope.

II Thessalonians 2:1-15

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus

Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him,

That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

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;

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.

Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they

might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

The above record was given about 2,000 years ago. Apparently, this concept of getting people shaken in mind is a very old one indeed. How we avoid this is by the study of God's Word. The Lord said to search the Scriptures not the newspapers. It's in the Bible that we will find our answers and not in the world. The world can only offer trouble and confusion. God offers peace and safety.

John 16:33

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

What a wonderful Savior! He has overcome and we are overcomers in him. Why wait for trouble when you

can wait for God's Son?

I Thessalonians 1:10

And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

We may have tribulation in the world but we have been delivered from the coming wrath. So now you know the reason for war and who to believe and who not to.

The Counselor's Corner

With Rev. Linus A. Mathis III

Shock Value

Most folks think of parenting in terms of infant to toddler. Due, in part, to the life changing impact of a new born. The dynamics of these "little ones" commands our full attention. A simple visit to grandma's dictates a supply and equipment inventory tantamount to a safari. Did someone say trailer? Fill your saddle bags, baby's going for a visit. By the way Grandma, do some child proofing before we get there. It's no marvel how these years seem to define the term parenting. Most of us parents get little respite before opening day of kindergarten. Mom and dad are pensive at first but soon sanction a quiet resolve as baby begins to familiarize with academia. The years of vigilance earmarked by constant attendance and surveillance are beginning to wane. Gone are the midnight feedings and wet diapers. The child's travel needs have been reduced to the size of a single backpack (Hallelujah!!!). You have nursed and guided that little "stranger" into a child with a

personality all their own. They have reached schoolage and you are now seasoned in the fine art of parenting. What makes it all the more beguiling is, for the next four years or so we acquire an assurance of having "a good handle on things." It seems that the job of parenting is all but complete. Then, when you least expect it, your child becomes a teenager. You soon discover that your teen needs a parent every bit as much as that new born did. Only now the stakes are higher.

We as parents dare NEVER abdicate our duties. Parenting doesn't end until that child becomes an adult. (P.S. - I'll let you in on a little secret, it doesn't end there either. The only change is that whereas you were required to speak, now you're commanded to be silent.) It's grave error to jettison common sense and morality so as to be politically correct. We all need a standard by which to govern our lives. I would suggest yours be the Bible. But, in any case, we dare not allow anything (including legislature) to cause us to abandon that which we know to be proper. More often than not our society flies in the face of common sense and decency. When it does, we should simply stand our ground and refuse to give space.

What I'm saying is, don't compromise what you know to be right just to help your teen produce a peer approved image. That would include hair cuts and clothes. You don't have to allow you son or daughter to dress in a way that you feel is inappropriate. Personal grooming is, as you know, a vital part of making a statement. So, you must ask yourself what kind of a statement would you like them to make? (I'll allow a sensible concern

for good health to address tattoos and body piercing.) As for music, movies, video games and the like, you need to be the FINAL word. Your discernment in these areas is VITAL! Every time you compromise, you give credence to your child's influences. I may sound restrictive but the fruit of permissive parenting is evidenced in our current events. We're all familiar with the denial that accompanies such atrocities. If you believe the Bible you can't accept what some of these disgruntled parents say.

Proverbs 20:11

Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work *be* pure, and whether *it be* right.

It's therefore presupposed that the child be observed.

Proverbs 29:15

The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame.

I'll leave the first part of this verse for another time as I'm presently concerned with; ". . . a child left to himself."

You are the parent and they are the child. Even if they are teenagers you must provide seemly regulation. Our society is very lax in this regard. Consequently, acts of unspeakable evil are occurring with increased frequency. You see, recognition is a basic human need. When an individual craves notoriety they must do something to obtain it. We have allowed vile things to be approved as convention. Therefore, it takes a great deal more to shock people today than it did a generation ago. In my school days, I'd get a detention if my shirt wasn't tucked into my

trousers. Today, it's acceptable to show up to class dressed like a ghoul. Speech, dress and action have entered into areas rejected and despised by our grandparents. Today's common discourse wasn't even a consideration for them. What shocked my parents wouldn't raise an eyebrow today. Therefore, teens are forced to be innovators of depravity. This is made possible because society embraces the perverse. Worse yet, we continue "to raise the bar" as to what is shocking. We adults are culpable. Provide the proper example.

I Peter 2:21

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

Refuse to tolerate the deification of evil.

-"The Counselor's Corner" also appears in Alaska Parenting Magazine in an edited version and under a different title"-
