

STUDY 3 – HOPEFUL SIGNS

Text: Matthew 24:14

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”
Matthew 24:14

I. NOT ALL THE END TIMES SIGNS ARE OUTSIDE OUR CONTROL

A. Most of the End times signs are negative and beyond our control.

We cannot control the wars that pop up all over the world.

We don't seem to be able to stop the floods, famines, and natural disasters that are increasing in frequency and intensity.

We cannot keep up with the introduction and influence of the fakes. (False messiahs, false prophets and teachers.)

We cannot run away from the uprising of anti-Christian views and persecutions in every part of the world.

B. The world-wide preaching of the Gospel is dependent on the last generation of believers.

1. Can we expedite the second coming of Christ?

Some Christians have debated whether we can expedite the return of Christ by accelerating World evangelization through mass media broadcasting of the Good News and massive missions outreaches all over the world.

This seems clear enough that evangelism factors into when Christ will return. The Reformation Study Bible agrees:

The “when” that Jesus gives is task oriented: it is after the gospel has been preached to the nations. —The Reformation Study Bible, note on Matt. 24:4-14

My concerns and question are more down-to-earth; **“Are believers delaying the return of Christ by their sluggish response to the Great Commission?”**

2. How about the verse “expecting and hastening the coming?”

While Matthew establishes a clear connection between evangelism and the return of Christ, Peter challenges personal responsibility:

*“Where is the promise of His coming? But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, **looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God**, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”*

2 Pet. 3:4, 8-9,12

This is a wake-up call for believers. I remember the first time I read it and understood the implications. It implies that we can speed up when Christ returns.

This changes our Christian life from passively waiting around to direct involvement.

Everyone is expecting the Lord's coming, but who is hastening it?

With regard to God's sovereignty and the kingdom, God chooses not act unilaterally.

He incorporates us into His move.

"The time of Christ's coming is determined by the sovereign counsel of God, but it does not take place without reference to other events. That God's delay is merciful indicates that the evangelization of the elect is one relevant factor. Other factors include prayer and obedience. Such a teaching should profoundly encourage Christians. Our actions do matter." The Reformation Study Bible, note on 2 Pet 3:12

II. HOPEFUL SIGNS POINT TO OUR MAIN MISSION DURING THESE END TIMES

A. Hopeful signs point to our main priority in the End times.

Not all signs of the end times are negative. These have resulted in the preaching of the gospel throughout the whole world, which is also a sign of the end times.

"But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come"
Matthew 24:13–14

1. The main focus of believers in these End Times should be the Main Thing!
"Evangelism is dying in many churches today. No, that's not an overstatement. I am not speaking hyperbolically...Most churches are busy with activities, programs, and ministries. Few churches are truly sending out their members to evangelize those in their communities. The Great Commission has fast become the Great Omission."
Thom Rainer, Church Answers
Too many believers are focussed on "what will happen in the End times, instead of what should we should be doing now?"
Too many are asking "when will be the day of His coming?" instead of "when should I begin doing my part?"
2. The main mission remains the same in these last days.
The last command of Christ is still applicable for these last days.
*"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, **even to the end of the age.**"*
Amen."
Matthew 28:18-20

B. Helpful promises.

“And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the remnant whom the Lord calls.” Joel 2:28–32

1. The prophet Joel prophesied that there would be a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days.

Be a part of this End Time revival.

God is still pouring out His Spirit on believers, ready and willing to share the Gospel in an increasingly anti-Christian world.

Are you counted among them? Have you opened your heart and life to the ministry of the Holy Spirit?

2. The prophet Amos prophesied of a coming harvest of miraculous proportions.

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it.” Amos 9:13 (NKJV)