

Be On Guard and Watch

Roger Tointon—February 4, 2023

You know what we are facing, what we have faced and, as they say, ‘We ain’t seen nothing, yet!’

What are we to do as individuals. We have to keep in mind, first of all, why are we here? *God called us!* He opened our mind and made it possible for us to see things that we did not see before. That’s why we’re here. What happened? *We became convicted! We entered into covenant with Him and that’s why we’re still here!*

With that in mind it can be discouraging if we focus too much upon what is happening. From a human standpoint, in our lifetime things are coming at us in an unparalleled way. As far as history, all the way back before the Flood, we don’t know if we have passed what they were back then, but we’re approaching it.

Why? *We’re going to see that now in Matt. 24, just briefly!* Of course, God apparently built into us as human beings the desire to see the future.

How does Matt. 24 start? *Jesus’ disciples were with Him near the temple.* Christ had said a few things and then they said:

Matthew 24:3: “... ‘Tell us, when shall these things be?...’”

What is that future? You have to keep in mind that they had in their mind at that time, and for some time after that, that Christ was going to return in their lifetime, in that first century.

Then they had to learn that, no, it just isn’t going to happen. But in any case, that’s how they felt! What did Christ say?

Verse 4: “Then Jesus answered *and* said to them, ‘**Be on guard...**’”

If we’re to be on guard, what does that mean? *That there is something that we need to be aware of, because something big is going to happen!*

Something big is an understatement, because it is going to happen. All of the Prophets talk about it, and they tell that *something big is coming!* Well, if you’re to be *on guard*, what are you to do? *You’re to try and be as prepared as you can!*

We are in an absolutely different situation than the people around us in the world, because God has opened our mind! He’s opened our mind so *we believe* and all that that word means in the Greek. We’re focused on God and trying to obey Him. We do, except we stumble! So, we repent and go on in faith!

So, we walk in faith! We know that we must trust God for those things that we’re seeing now, because there’s no way we’re going to be able to stop anything that’s taking place. We just can’t do it! So, we do the best we can trusting God to guide us through the ‘combs’ as I like to say. Those are a little tough, but it’s little tough for us right now in the things that we face. ***But we are to be on guard!***

Verse 12: “And because lawlessness shall be multiplied...”

Have we already seen that? *Absolutely! It is unparalleled in our time!* With lawlessness many things happen. For us as little ones that must endure to the end—not just get over whatever number of years in the past—and what we’re still facing. If we’re to be on guard, then what do we have to do? *We have to be drawing closer to God!* That’s what it’s all about!

Verse 36: “But concerning that day... [the disciples had asked about things leading up to that day] ...and the hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. Now, ***as it was in the days of Noah...***” (vs 36-37).

We always wonder and always have since we came to understand things of God’s Plan, just how was it? It explains it a little bit right here, and if you turn to Gen. 6 it says a little bit more. They were simply living life, just like people now.

We look at people around us going around with their masks on in fear, wanting to get off the sidewalk when you come by. That’s lessened some, but it was there big time! They’re in fear! Why? *Because they do not understand what we do!* So, we don’t have to live in that fear, but we call them ‘delusional.’ Well, they are delusional, but it’s not entirely their fault!

They are blinded from the Truth, and we can see, so we overreact, I’m sure, toward them, because they can’t see, and God knows that. It’s all built into His Plan; He will have mercy on them, and that is a good thing!

- we have to be aware
- we have to watch
- we have to prepare the best we can

Trusting God! The main thing is what He says when He comes:

Verse 46: “Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing.”

What does “...so doing” imply? *We are in covenant with God!* He called us and opened our

mind and we responded. What did we do? *We were baptized into covenant with Him and Christ! We pledged to seek His way rather than our own way, which the world is seeking. Until death, literally or for some people will be in the same condition right at the end. To them that's going to be fantastic!*

Can you imagine, 'in a moment, in the twinkling of the eye' *to go from what you are and have been all your life to a son of God!* That is hard to comprehend!

I really want to get into 2-Peter; I really get so much out of what Peter said and the passion in which he said it. Peter and Paul mirror each other a lot, and we're going to find that out here.

2-Peter 1:1: "Simon Peter a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ..."

They never apologized for that, or hide it in any way; they had been given authority by Christ. They spent three years with Him learning, being led through things preparing them for their job that they did when this was all recorded. It was recorded in heaven before we ever received it in print.

But they spoke as Peter says right here; everybody that wrote this down was inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. That's why we can rely on it as the very Word of God. They were inspired by the Holy Spirit!

"...to those who have obtained *the same precious faith...*" (v 1).

It is *precious* because when you are fully convicted you become committed to your covenant and it becomes precious, the precious promises that God has given to us.

Verse 2: "Grace and peace..."

Isn't that what all mankind wants? *Yes, they do, they just don't how to find true peace and are blocked from it by the blindness!* They try to do things their own way.

"...be multiplied to you **in the knowledge of God** and of Jesus our Lord" (v 2). *That is where true peace comes from!* Only in the knowledge of the Truth of God.

Verse 3: "According as His Divine power has given to us **all things** that *pertain* to life and Godliness..."

Can we try to understand what that means? We have been given what we need to go forward and prove to God that we're faithful. We don't need to know every new thing that comes along, ideas of men and what they think. *We have it here in the Word of God!*

"...**all things...**"—*all things for salvation!* We definitely do not know all things of the world, let alone the Word of God. But we do know what we need to know.

Verse 4: "Through which **He has given to us the greatest and most precious promises...**"

With those promises we have everything given to us that need to be faithful. To back out on what God has shown us when He opened our mind *is unthinkable! It should be unthinkable to us!*

Things go through our mind when you go through 40, 50 years, things go through your mind many times. Things and trials come up in our lives. Some trials are very hard. God made plain as soon as He called me, one of the first things was that you are going to have to go through trials.

God knows why! It's to keep us on the road to salvation. So, we're given those promises.

Now we'll see what Paul says parallel to this.

Ephesians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God... [the Father] ...to the saints... [the ones of that same precious faith] ...who are in Ephesus and to *the* faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace... [that's what we are working toward and looking forward to] ...*be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 1-2).

God has promised us peace today. Go through the Scriptures and what does He say? *You do what I say and you will have peace!* He didn't mean just in the future, but even in this life.

Think about how your life was turned upside down. Oh yes, some of it right away. It was a test! What was the rest of it? *You look back and you realize how much God had already blessed you by obeying him through the tests you just went through!* That is a very real thing. We can get peace that way.

Verse 2: "Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing... [Does that ring a bell? *It's a little different wording, but the same thing!*] ...in the heavenly *things* with Christ" (vs 2-3).

I have emphasized v 4 when I have spoken to many different people. It is not of us, *it absolutely is not of us*, it could not have been of us. God the Father had to start the ball rolling for everything to take place after that.

Verse 4: "According as **He [the Father] has personally chosen us for Himself...**"

He has chosen us, selected us. We do not know why He selected us. We know that He wants firstfruits into the Kingdom of God, but why us, we don't know, but I'm going to ask Him one day, and He will tell me if I'm faithful. You can say that for yourself.

“...He has personally chosen us for Himself...”

- What does that imply?
- What does it indicate more than it implies?

God has a purpose for us! Yes, to become firstfruits, that is absolute throughout the New Testament. It is all written to us, first. It will apply to other people later, but it is written to us.

He has something in mind that we are to do as firstfruits, because very soon here we're going to see how God looks at us now, and what He calls us now. That will make the point.

Verse 5: **“Having predestinated us for sonship to Himself...”**

For God's own very purpose is why He selected us. We don't know all the details of that, but we're going to find out if we're faithful. We're going to be involved in it, and it's going to be something fantastic, out of this world!

1-Peter 2:1: “Therefore, having put away all wickedness, and all deceit, and hypocrisies and jealousies, and all slanders”—*and there's much more!*

That's what we have had to do when God called us.

Verse 2: “As newborn babes...”

Read 1-Cor.; we know what we are, what we were and what we still are in many ways. We're nobody in this world. The world doesn't know we exist, really. Some of the people we know do, but beyond that, nothing. So, we're like newborn babes.

“...yearn after the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow...” (v 2)—*in Godliness!*

- Isn't that what our assignment now is? *We are to grow in Godliness!*
- How can we do something for God if we don't grow more like Him?

Verse 3: “If you yourselves have indeed tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.... [then he addresses Christ]: ...To Whom [Christ] coming, *as to* a living Stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God, *and precious*” (vs 3-4)—*because Christ was faithful! Christ led the way!*

Christ is our elder brother when you get right down to it. That's the way God looks at it. He is our elder brother, and that's what we are to become as Christ's brother/sister. We are to be like Him!

Verse 5: “You also... [he addresses right to us]: ...as living stones, are being built up *as* a spiritual house...”

We are being built up; we are going through school big time. We have to do things God's way and we're learning how to do things God's way, and to prepare for the purpose that God has for us.

“...—**a Holy priesthood**—to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God [the Father] through Jesus Christ” (v 5).

That's part of what we're going to be doing. In actuality, in preparing for it, we can do that to some degree.

It all goes through Jesus Christ. After the Father selected and called us, and we responded and entered into covenant with Him, then as Jude shows He gave us to Christ to further teach, tutor, work with and to make intercession for us to the Father whenever Satan accuses us.

He said, ‘Look, see what he did’ just like Satan did to Christ in Job 1, which you've read many times. That's what he does to us every time we mess up. How many times was it Satan's inspiration? We don't know for sure, because we also have human nature.

We know that Satan is deeply involved. I think, personally, that we really don't understand the depth that Satan effects us as we go through our daily lives. *But he does!*

Verse 6: “For this reason it says in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I place in Zion *the* Cornerstone [Christ]. chosen *and* precious; and **the one who believes in Him shall never be put to shame.**”

Remember that *believe* is a very key word. When go deeply into the Greek meaning of that word, it's every bit absolute dedication to God and to Christ. That's what we must be as we go through our time of judgment.

Verse 7: “The preciousness *is* to you, therefore, who believe; but to those who disobey...”—***watch out***, because that Cornerstone is going grind him to powder. We don't want to be part of that, because our end would be worse than their end that is coming. Because we believe, so our end is different!

Deut. 7—I want you to see a little something that really hit me the other day. You know the story of Israel, and three months after Christ brought them

out of Egypt—where He deliberately put them for that time that they had to go through that—to rescue them. He wanted them to know that He was God, in no uncertain terms. The rest of the world did not know that, they didn't have a clue. But they did know that Israel was a people with a different God than they had. They knew that and that's why they had to go through so much, our ancestors of Israel.

Deuteronomy 7:6: “For you *are* a Holy people to the LORD your God. **The LORD your God has chosen you to be a special people...** [just like us] **...to Himself** above all people that are upon the face of the earth.”

He chose Israel in the same way that He has chosen us for His own purpose for us and for them back then. It was for whatever He wanted them to do, and that was mainly to be a witness that He was God to all the heathen around, to all those other nations: Philistines, you name it who were the enemies of God's people.

He would then do some devastating things to those around to get their attention and let them know that, yes, He was the true God. That's the way it was.

Exodus 19:4: “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you unto Myself.”

- God is in charge of His people
- He is in charge of us today

Many of us are remnant of the forefathers, Israelites. But whether we're Gentiles grafted in, it doesn't matter. Once you're grafted in your part of the trunk of the tree or the vine.

Verse 6: “And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a Holy nation...”

Didn't we read this in Peter? *Same thing!* That's what He said of Israel.

“...These *are* the words which you shall speak...” (v 6).

God called us for a purpose! He knows the purpose; He knows it clearly. That purpose starts now, the way that He speaks, He speaks of us now as His sons and daughters. He says, ‘You are the sons of God.’

We're still in the flesh but our life was turned upside down when He called us, and a short time later the power of His very Holy Spirit—from Christ and the Father—came into us when we entered into covenant.

Once that Spirit was within us—Paul writes so much about that—we're different then, unless the

unthinkable of turning back and spurning that calling—***which we can never do!***

We know that, but it's like some say that we have a choice. You bet we do, God makes sure that we have a choice, even people in the world have a choice. But I always say, ‘I don't have a choice,’ because that's what it seems like to me. ***I know the end! I understand the end!*** If I turn back from that it is over!

All those people around us out there in the world, is it over for them? *No! They have not yet entered judgment; they have never had their mind open so they could under the true judgment of God, which we have been!* We—most of us—have been for several decades.

For us it is different; completely different!

1-Peter 2:6: “For this reason it says in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I place in Zion *the* Cornerstone, chosen *and* precious; and the one who believes in Him shall never be put to shame.’”

We are working to not be ashamed!

Verse 7: “The preciousness *is* to you, therefore, who believe; but to those who disobey...”

Verse 9: “But **you are a chosen stock**, a royal priesthood, a Holy nation, a people for **a possession of God**...”

That's it! It started with God! We were nothing, He drew us to Himself! Everything forward is the same way. God leads the way, starts the ball rolling and Christ picks it up and works with us, and He is there for us constantly.

When we get off from the centerline of the highway to the Kingdom of God, He'll nudge us and nudge us until we come back onto the main road and we come off of the shoulder. No matter how far over the shoulder you went, unless you just go all the way down and say, ‘no, I don't want it.’ Again, ***that's unthinkable!***

Therefore, Christ is there for us. We're chosen by God:

“...that you might proclaim His *excellent* virtues...” (v 9).

That's part of our assignment by our very actions, in our witnessing in whatever small way we can at the present time. By obeying God we are adding to God's glory!

When all of the people of the earth are finally going God's way, even the first part of the Millennium, isn't that adding glory to God? He says so in His Word.

“...Who [the Father] called you out of

darkness into His marvelous light; who once *were* not a people, **but now are the people of God...**" (vs 9-10).

You can see that change; we have been changed, but not yet received the fullness of that. But we have been changed, absolutely!

Rom. 8 is so applicable in trying to understand why God called us and what His purpose for us is. We'll learn more of that later when God reveals it.

Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God..."

Christ says, 'If you love Me, keep the commandments, obey My voice!' that's plain enough to understand. So, all things will work together for good for us!

"...to those who are called according to His purpose, because those whom He did foreknow He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His own Son..." (vs 28-29)—*Christ our elder brother; we're to conform to His image!*

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us..."

He loved us before we loved Him! We were nothing!

"...that we should be called the children of God!..." (v 1). *That's the way God looks at us, we are His children!*

"...For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him.... [even though we don't know for sure what we will be] ...Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be... [we won't know until that great moment on that great day] **...but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him...**" (vs 1-2)—*because we will finally, literally see God face-to-face!*

That would just blow us away right now! When that time comes and we are faithful it will not blow us away, it will send us like a rocket right straight up! It is really going to be something!

With that kind of testimony from all of God's Word, how can we ever, ever think of abdicating? *We can't!*

- we know God
- we love God

That's why we're still here; we were called a long time ago. For me, 60+years! For a puny little man that's quite a while!

We have to go forward! We see unparalleled things and we have to draw close to God and focus

on that. But do not get off guard by not paying attention to what is happening. We have to keep it in mind every time that we do anything, we have to realize that we can get into trouble if we do the wrong things or even go to the wrong places.

We can do that much, and we're trusting God when we go out the door if we pray to Him in the morning. But we can do our part. We have a job still to do! We have not arrived, as Paul said, and he says, 'I know that there's a crown laid up for me.' We should have that same confidence if we're close to God.

That's what it is! ***We have to be close to God! Brethren, keep up the good work!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 24:3-4, 12, 36-37, 46
- 2) 2 Peter 1:1-4
- 3) Ephesians 1:1-5
- 4) 1 Peter 2:1-7
- 5) Deuteronomy 7:6
- 6) Exodus 19: 4, 6
- 7) 1 Peter 2:6-7, 9-10
- 8) Romans 9:28-29
- 9) 1 John 3:1-2

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 6
- Job 1

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