

Session 1

How Then Should We Pray?

By Cindy Smith – Jan 6, 2009

If this is indeed the last hours of the last days, the days leading up to “the Day of the Lord”, His return upon planet Earth, His return for His Bride, the Bride who will be without spot or wrinkle, how then should we live?

II Peter 3:3 says “First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘Where is this coming he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.’ But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. Vs 8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: “With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousands years are like a day.” (Ps 90:8) The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with this promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.”

So what kind of people should we be? Holy, consecrated, set apart for the Lord. We are the sacred vessels in the Lord’s dwelling place on this earth. We should live in a Godly way. We should return to those things that at first we knew of the Lord, and how we got acquainted is how we will know Him more. This series will address the issues of spiritual disciplines needed not only for the Bride to make herself ready, but also to join in the spiritual battle needed to hasten that day.

So again, how shall we live and what kind of people should we be? Luke 21:34-36 “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.” No man knows the day or the hour of Christ’s return, but the Father. (Matt 13:32) In these next 4 weeks we will answer these questions:

How then should we pray?

How then should we worship?

How then should we relate to God’s word?

How then should we fellowship?

God wants His children to be discerning and watchful! In I Chr 12:32 it says that the men of Issachar, one of the 12 tribes who were armed for battle as mighty men who came to help David at Hebron, to turn Saul’s kingdom over to him. They were those who understood the times and knew what Israel should do. God wants us to possess these abilities to be able to discern the times in which we live and to be able to know what we should do. Their gifts were just that-the eyes and ears to God. They were not many in the day of battle compared to the other tribes, but their gifts were an absolute necessity. First let’s read some foundational scriptures for the end times. Mark 13:5-27 and Luke 21:7-28.

Let’s read a few other verses: I Thes 5:1-10, Eph 5:8-17, I Pet 1:17-21, I Pet 2:11-13, Rev 19:1-16 and Joel 2 & 3 which speaks of the Day of the Lord as both a day of judgment for unbelievers and a day of outpouring of the Spirit and glory of God.

What are the signs of the approach of the Lord’s return-the unrolling of one scroll that is our end time battle plan? I will give the 10 most important signs to which you should pay attention:

- 1) **Activities in Israel and Jerusalem.** Even now, the eyes of the world are watching the unfolding of events in Israel and Gaza. It has the potential to escalate, to involve an attack from the North-just now Hezbollah is threatening the northern borders of Israel and it is just talk, but if their actions follow their talk-watch! Matt 24:32-35. Since the establishment of Israel as a nation, the end times clock is ticking-it was a supernatural prophetic sign. There is a parallel between the move of God in Israel and the move of God in His church. In the 50’s, there was a healing revival in Israel and a healing revival in the church. In the 60’s, 1967, the Six Day War, where victory against amazing odds in Israel corresponded to the advance of the church through the Jesus Movement.
- 2) **The knowledge explosion,** Dan 12:4. We now have the exponential ability to move from one place to another through the internet and it is getting faster and faster. We can have instant communication, instant knowledge and can barely keep up with the technology. It has been foretold that knowledge would increase. When Christ returns one day, it says all will see Him.
- 3) **Financial shifts,** Rev 13:16. Does anyone disagree with that? We have seen banks, Wall Street and big corporations reel as drunken men. Because of the financial losses and the massive shift of wealth, there is a move now toward the globalization of one unit of currency. The RFID’s are developing where microchips are inserted, now for animals, prisoners, and now approved by the FDA for human health info. They are not yet able to carry financial information or to track you, but the infrastructure has been developed. You have marks on your passport and credit cards that identify you. We are not to panic, because we are citizens of this world. We lay up our treasures in heaven. There are promises to those

who tithe that will not change because of the darkness of our world. As Christians, our economy is not beyond that of this world.

- 4) **Deceivers and scoffers**, Matt 24:4. We are Jesus freaks. We insist that there is absolute truth and the world says the opposite. We are being set up by the Lord for a surge of boldness to come over a persecuted church. In John 15:18-25, we see that the world will hate us and will persecute us. II Thes 2:3-12, “Don’t let anyone deceive you...(read)
- 5) **Natural disasters**, Matt 24:7 In 2008, 220,000 people were counted as killed in natural disasters, through earthquakes, severe storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and mudslides.
- 6) **Nations aligning**, Matt 24:7. In Daniel’s day, Dan 11:1-35, it speaks of the known kingdoms and of Antiochus Epiphanes, 175-164 B.C., is a type of the Antichrist. Dan 12:40-45 and Zech 14:2 refers to the aligning of nations against Israel. One day it says that all nations will turn against Israel and it also says that all Israel will be saved.
- 7) **Noah’s day revisited**, Gen 6, Heb 11:7, I Pet 3:20, Luke 17:25-30. In the account of Noah in Gen 6 & it speaks of mockers and scoffers and of a “party spirit” of drunkenness, immorality, idolatry and lawlessness-utter rebellion towards God.
- 8) **Massive revival**, Matt 24:15. Rom 13:11-14. Global preaching of the Gospel, of the message of salvation. We are coming back to simple preaching that is endowed with the power of God to transform people, cities and nations-the message of repentance and forgiveness through the cross. Every nation and people group will hear!
- 9) **Persecution on a grand scale**, Matt 24:9, Rev 7:14-17 and the Antichrist revealed, Dan 11:36, I John 2:18,22 and II John 7
- 10) **The Glorious rapture**, I Thes 4:15-18, Dan 12:2.

So these are signs of His return. I Pet 4:7 says “The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.” So we are to pray with a fervency from the perspective of readying ourselves to meet the Lord here, there or in the air. We pray alone and converse with our God. We listen as if our life depended upon it. We declare alone and corporately the promise of His logos and rhema word. God needs us to pray. In every generation he sees that His priesthood is established. I Pet 2:4-5, 2:9-10. Heb 4:14-16-pray with confidence, with boldness! Eph 6:10-12, 18. Pray that you might stand firm in the day of testing. I Thes 5:17-18, Pray continually. Amos 9:11 It says in Revelation 5:8 that our prayers are like incense of which the smoke rises before the Lord.

Jesus is our Great High Priest-our Chief intercessor; we follow His example: Heb 10:11-18, 35-39, Heb 12:1-3, and Heb 13:14

Let’s look at the book of Joel:2:12-13, 17 and 1:13-14 Prayer should be accompanied with fasting. Jesus does not say “if you fast” but “when you fast.” Often deliverance will only come with prayer and fasting.

In these last days the Lord will ask Him to obey Him and that obedience may be our salvation and that of our family. So we must recognize His still small voice. In Isa 30:18, the Lord promises us that He will direct our steps telling us which way to go-we will hear a voice behind us.

So then how should we pray? We should pray prayers of repentance and confession, prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of petition for our ourselves and we should intercede for others, pray that laborers would be released into the harvest, pray for cities, for nations, for leaders, pray for the release of Spiritual gifts, pray for the lost. We should pray with understanding and pray in the Spirit. We should pray at all times-like the times mentioned in Ecclesiastes. We can pray apostolic prayers, prophetic prayers, worshipful prayers. Prayer should be God-centered, not self-centered. Prayer should be Bible-based. Corporate prayer should be heard to bring all into agreement. We should pray with passion. Travail is often a part of intensive prayer where you enter into the burden of Our Father’s heart. Even nature is groaning for the revelation of Christ upon the earth and the restoration of all things, it says in Romans. So with that in mind, let’s pray for three things in small groups:

- 1) Ask Him for forgiveness for prayerlessness, for lack of passion in our prayers, for infrequency of prayer. If our prayers tell us what we believe about God-we need some help. When a prayer meeting is called and only a handful show up, it shows our corporate strength. Let’s ask Him for grace for prayer with fasting. If we ask anything according to His will in Jesus’ name, He will answer.
- 2) Ask Him for healthy devotional lives and spiritual focus for our families. For God’s purpose to be revealed for our families-where we are to serve in the church.
- 3) Ask him for provision and protection, for our families and friends, for our church and for our city and nation. Declare the promises of God for his protection and provision and thank Him for His faithfulness in all these groups.

I Cor 1:7-9

Homework:

1. Use this month to review Scriptures from class.
2. Read the book of Revelation using the handout given in class.
3. Prepare yourself for participation in the 21-day fast, Jan 11th-31st.