

Watch and Remember

Roger Tointon—December 21, 2013

Greetings to you! It's great any time the people of God can get together. This is God's Sabbath Day and what does God command? *That we come together and we learn how to love Him*, by learning how to love each other. What better time than on the Sabbath or one of the Feast days. That's why I always promote that.

The other day when I woke up an idea came into my mind. I don't know how many times that's happened to you, but Fred has mentioned it many times. You're laying there and you don't quite want to get up and an idea comes into mind. I thought: I need to get up and I need to go check it out. In about 45 minutes or so I had some Scriptures, some thoughts that can be a message some day. I called Fred and he called back a couple of days later and said, 'If you're coming down you should speak.' So, here we are, and I'm thankful for this opportunity. I get to speak to some that I don't get to see and talk to.

There's only one trouble in our fellowship of Christian Biblical Church of God; when you have to give a short message and you find out that the people that have spoken before you have covered everything you wanted to say. We listened to two messages coming here: one from Fred and one from Roger Kendall. Both of them really beat on my territory.

There's one thing when you go through the Word of God, it should never get old. God tells us that we need *to remember!* We need to remember what we have heard before. Brethren, I'm going to start in Matt. 24. I'm going to mention the thought that came to my mind. I wonder just how it truly was.

Matthew 24:37: "Now, as *it was in* the days of Noah, so shall *it also be at* the coming of the Son of man." We have heard that, read that many, many times. But how was it in the days of Noah that caused God to do what He did?

We're going to look briefly at some things, because there is one point I think that I can bring out that will help us kind of understand what Christ was talking about in Matt. 24

Genesis 6 is talking about some of the things that were beginning to go on that were part of the problem by the time that God went ahead and decided that He had to wipe out mankind. They had just gotten so bad.

Genesis 6:5: And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great on the earth, and every

imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually." There's an awful lot in there that is not spelled out. I do not think that we can fully understand just how it was.

Verse 6: "And the LORD repented that He had made man on the earth, and He *was* grieved in His heart." That's how bad mankind was in the things that they were doing. Again, we do not know exactly the condition there.

Verse 7: "And the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the crawling thing, and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them.' But Noah... [one man] ...found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (vs 7-8).

It had gotten so bad that we do not know just how bad, but compare that now. What did Christ say? Christ was talking to us at the end-time. He said, 'Watch!' Because it was going to get as it was in the days of Noah.

If you're looking for a timeframe, is it as bad now as it was in the days of Noah? Is it really as bad? It's not exactly, that's for sure, because there's more than one man on the face of the earth now who does know God, whom God is tabernacling with. So, it's not exactly as it was then.

Yet, the overall conditions are moving closer and closer to that. But do we know that it will be next year, the year after, ten years, forty years to the Tribulation? We don't really know at this point. What are we to learn?

Verse 9: "These *are* the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man and perfect in his generations, for Noah walked with God." You can remember that in Sodom in Gomorrah that, again, there was an absolutely impossible situation in God's eyes. There was this area that was so bad that God said, 'I have to check it out.' He sent the two angels. He had to check it out and see if it has to be destroyed.

Then in Gen. 18 it says that Abraham didn't want to see this happen because of Lot. Abraham said, 'God, if there are 50 righteous...' and he works down to five. Again, there was one man; just one man! Lot had two son-in-laws and Lot said, 'Hey, get up and get out of here because God is going to destroy this place.' They thought he was crazy; they laughed at him.

I just wonder if my son-in-law would do the same when that time comes. But it is the way it is; there was one man.

Lot was told to take his wife and daughter and to get out of there. His wife didn't really want to go, as she proved, and she became a 'pillar of salt.' But Lot did leave with his daughters, because God had other things in mind after that.

There are some other things that we need to look at in Matthew 24:38—Christ says: "For as in the days that *were* before the Flood, they were... [living life] ...eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage..." Their focus was not upon God—it was not upon anything to do with God—it was upon the *things of this life!* That is the problem with mankind from the beginning. They don't want to focus upon God or the things of God.

What did they do? *They wax worse and worse!* Right here we see that they were doing all these things. But v 19 gives a clue as to what Christ was really warning us of. He knew that in this end-time that He would call people whom He would make a covenant with and they would be His special chosen people to become firstfruits in the Kingdom of God. He knew things would be a little different.

The people in Noah's time were not aware! That was the main overall problem. Yes, what they were doing was evil, but why did they all get taken away by the Flood? *Because they were not aware!* Is that not the condition in the world around us today for the most part?

Sure, you have some out there who have always been talking about the end of the world and looking for it, but they've been wrong in all their predictions and ideas about it? *Because they don't know God!* Overall, and you rub shoulders with them everyday out in the world, *they're unaware.* If you were to tell them the things that we go over from the Word of God they, too, would laugh at you.

It's something that we have to see: What is the message that Christ is trying to tell us in this time? After the Flood Moses recorded how the nature of man was going to still be; it was still going to be 'evil continually' in his thoughts; in his mind (Gen. 8:21). That is the nature of man!

Christ really made this plain. The Pharisees were upset because the disciples without washing according to their rituals.

Matthew 15:18: "But the things that go forth from the mouth come out of the heart, and these defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessing *and* blasphemies" (vs 18-19). That is what is in us until God begins to work with us.

Does everybody out there do all of these things? *No, not necessarily!* But I imagine that in their mind they have one time or another. We all

did! Maybe because of our upbringing we were held back from literally doing some of these things, but yet, our heart was evil. Jer.17:9 proves that. God does not lie, and Christ underscored it all again.

What is it then that Christ said over and over in Matt. 24 and elsewhere? *We are to watch!* Yes, we are to watch, but is it just so that we might know when He is coming? He says we won't know the day or the hour! Is that the most important thing that Christ was trying to drive home to us? Or was it that we need to watch so that we will not be caught unaware and that we will let down in our Christian responsibility. I think that's the main thing that Christ's message was to us.

What is our responsibility? *We'll begin to see!* Christ did say that we are to watch. Why? I hope that we can understand that as we go through it.

1-Thessalonians 5: "Now then, concerning the times and the seasons... [that's what we're talking about; as it was in the days of Noah so shall it be] ...brethren, there is no need that I write to you." That should be true for us, too, today!

Verse 2: "For you yourselves understand perfectly that the day of *the* Lord will come exactly as a thief *comes* by night." We've heard that over and over; for some of us over 40 years! We know that, but what's the message to us?

Verse 4: "But you, brethren, are not in darkness that the day of *the* Lord should overtake you as a thief." It should not! But then what?

Verse 5: "*For* you are all children of *the* light and children of *the* day; we are not of *the* night, nor of *the* darkness. So then, **we should not sleep...** [we *should not* because we can; if we let down in any way, we can lull ourselves to sleep] ...as others *do...* [and truly others are doing that] ...but we should watch, and we should be sober" (vs 5-6).

Sometimes my wife says that I'm too serious. I just say, 'No, I've got to be sober. God tells me!' Paul says that we are to be sober, because when we see the things around us in the world, it should remind us that God's Word is true, and only God's Word is true. Everything that He says will come to pass.

Verse 7: "For those who are sleeping sleep in *the* night, and those who are drunken get drunk in *the* night. But we who are of *the* day should be sober, having put on *the* breastplate of faith and love, and *for* a helmet *the* hope of salvation" (vs 7-8).

We do have a hope of salvation! That is the thing we look forward to. That is why we give up a little of ourselves every day, if we're doing what we

should.

We have to sacrifice a lot of things in this world. Is it a great burden upon us? *Well, it shouldn't be!* When we look at the glorious calling that we have, it shouldn't be that big of a burden. Yet, sometimes we do have to sacrifice. We've all gone through that.

Verse 9: "Because God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." That is the whole key that makes us different; to help us.

Verse 10: "Who died for us, so that whether we *remain alive until He comes* or we *fall asleep before that day*, together we may live *forever* with Him."

What was Christ really trying to get us to understand in Matt. 24? *The main thing is how we conduct ourselves!* Not whether we know the year when things are really going to start to happen. Yes, we need to be watching; we're warned of that all the time. But the main thing is *our focus upon God and what He promises for us!*

Verse 13: "And to greatly respect them in love for the sake of their work. Be at peace among yourselves." That, of course, as long as there's been the Church of God there has been a problem with that amongst some people. Some just can't get along with others, and one thing leads to another. Then other people get a bad attitude. That, brethren, should not be with us, no matter where we are upon this earth.

From Australia and New Zealand to Canada and across this great land we should be wanting to come together on God's Sabbath Day when we can. I know a lot of you can't, and I wish you could. But we can keep our brethren in mind and we can be in contact as much as possible. If we can learn, as much as possible, to get along together, then we can learn better how to love God. It is so important.

Verse 11: "Encourage one another, and edify one another..." We should be doing that all the time in prayer, on the phone, in person when we can; we should always be thinking of that. We're not in this alone! God didn't call us because we're some great one. He called all of us together—separately in our own walk of life—and He wants us to be thinking of each other.

Verse 14: "Now we encourage you, brethren, *to admonish those who are irresponsible, console the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient* toward everyone." That sometimes takes some doing! I can get on people's nerves, I'm sure. I've met people who can get on my nerves! If you let the heat of the moment move you in the wrong direction, in the wrong way, what happens? *A lot of*

wrong things can happen! People can be offended! What is key at that point? Patience!

It is difficult at times, but the closer you draw to God, the more patience you're going to have. Keep that in mind!

I want to go to another area. Peter had a lot of points to make, and he also says, 'Even as our brother Paul has said...'

2-Peter 3:1: "Now, beloved, I am writing this second epistle to you; in *both*, I am stirring up your pure minds **by causing you to remember.**" The Word of God should never become boring. We should never be afraid to go over the same things, because God wants us to remember. How do you do that except by repetition?

- God knows the way we are!
- He knows our mind!
- He knows what we need!

Why do you think He created the Sabbath Day and made it Holy and commanded it as a commanded assembly? *Because He knew that we would need it down through time, and especially as we draw closer to the end!* The things that are prophesied *we need to remember!*

Verse 2: "*In order* for you to be mindful of the words that were spoken before by the Holy prophets, and of the commandment of the Lord and Savior, *spoken* by us, the apostles." That's what we read in the Old and New Testaments of God's Word.

Verse 3: "Knowing this first, that in the last days *there* will come mockers, walking according to their own personal lusts." There are mockers in the world. There have been, sadly, too many mockers in the Church of God. They have turned away and have led others with them. That should not be, but it is a fact of life.

What is God saying to us when He says, 'Watch and remember'? *He's saying not to be swayed by people like that, if they appear, and get away from them!* You look to God!

Ever since the forefathers died, everything has remained the same as from the beginning of creation. I'm reminded of the latest billboard of the 'great' atheist church—they're on a campaign in Calif.—and I came by one very close to my house the other day. It showed this joyous person up there on this big billboard, and it says: No God! No devil! No worries! I'm afraid they have a rude awakening coming, and it may be quicker than they think. They're going to have their worries all right, and I wouldn't want to be up there on that billboard.

Verse 5: "But this *fact* is hidden from them—they themselves choosing *to ignore it*—that

by the Word of God *the* heavens existed of old, and *the* earth came forth out of water and amid water, by which the world at that time, having been deluged with water, had itself been destroyed” (vs 5-6).

Brethren, they don't know that, but don't we know that? Haven't we known that from the time that we were called? We began to learn about Gen. 1 and what happened at the very beginning, and all of these things that have taken place before us. We know that because when God called us, He opened our minds and we became convicted, or we wouldn't still be here.

Many of our brethren who were with us, maybe 25-30 years, are not here now, because something happened along the way. We were convicted and we can know these things. We don't have to be led astray.

Verse 7: “But the present heavens and earth are being held in store by His Word...” God is holding it all together in spite of all that man has done; in spite of our times becoming closer and closer *as it was in the days of Noah* when man was evil, doing so many things that God says, ‘No, it cannot go on. I have to destroy them and start over with Noah and his family.

He did, and we have the present world that is now coming back to that same thing. Why? *Because of the human mind and all that it is capable of without God!*

Brethren, we have God, and that's what we need to hold onto. We need to hold onto that as never before, as we see the end coming upon us.

“...and are being reserved for fire in *the* day of judgment and destruction of *the* ungodly” (v 7). That time will come. We've been going through that in the series that Fred has been doing on the *14 Things to Watch for in Prophecy*. It's all there; we've read it many times and it is real.

- Do you believe it?
- Do you really believe it?

Verse 9: “The Lord is not delaying the promise *of His coming*... [as some say] ...as some in their own minds reckon delay; rather, He is long-suffering toward us...” Nothing could be more true than that. If God were not long-suffering, long ago He would have wiped us out! He would have said, ‘enough is enough.’ But He is long-suffering! Why?

“...not desiring that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (v 9). That's what we have to remind ourselves of. We really need to do that every day, every Sabbath, and many times a day to think upon the things that God is telling us, and reminding us of.

We need to focus on God and we need to get serious. We're down to a time of being serious. Paul said many things; Paul went through many things, and we probably hope that we don't have to go through a lot of things that he did. None of us want to do that. None of us want to be martyred. Yet, we don't know; we simply don't know. There will be some spared; God makes that plain. His Church will always exist until the day of the first resurrection.

2-Timothy 4:6—Paul says: “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished the course...” (vs 6-7). Can we say that, brethren? Can we in all honesty say that? know that? *We need to think on that!*

“...I have kept the faith” (v 7). What is our calling? *To keep the faith!* Christ says, ‘Will I find faith when I come?’ *Brethren, He had better!*

Verse 8: “From this time forward, a crown of righteousness is laid up for me...” See how confident Paul was; was he confident in the wrong way? *No!* He was confident because He was focused upon God! He had submitted himself to God, to great, great troubles and trials and persecution. He was faithful and he knew that. and he could claim the promises that God offers. He did, and he was confident of it.

“...which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day—and not to me only, but also to all who love His appearing” (v 8).

- Do we love His appearing?
- Are we focused upon God?

That is what we should be doing, just as Paul said!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 24:37
- 2) Genesis 6:5-9
- 3) Matthew 15:18-19
- 4) 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2, 3-8, 10, 13, 11, 14
- 5) 2 Peter 3:1-7, 9

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 18
- Matthew 24:39
- Jeremiah 17:9
- Genesis 1

Also referenced: Sermon Series: *14 Things to Watch for in Prophecy*

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Transcribed: 1-5-14

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