

To Every Man His Work

The Lord Jesus has informed His disciples about the soon-to-come destruction of Jerusalem. He has been speaking about this event all along and He now brings His message to its end by giving a parable from a fig tree in springtime and a warning to watchfulness. Just as the witness of nature prepares men and women for the seasons of the year, so the warnings of the Lord inform His followers of danger and open a way of escape from their enemies, sin and death. These experiences would be fulfilled within the lifetime of the present generation and the calamities coming upon the Jewish nation were absolutely certain.

The day and hour unknown

Concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, neither the angels nor the Lord Jesus Himself in His human nature knew the day or the hour it would happen. This hiding of the precise moment was designed to raise attentiveness amongst the Lord's people and keep them vigilant. It was a lesson for that generation but one designed to elevate watchfulness in every generation by keeping the Lord's people alert to the promise of the Saviour's return to judge the world at the end of the age. We look for and hasten unto the coming of the day of God.

It also applies to every individual believer concerning the unknown, but appointed time of our own physical passing from this world in death. We do not know the day and hour our earthly life will end and this should keep us looking to Christ. Moses asks in Psalm 90:12, 'teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom'.

Watch and pray

The Lord's message to His disciples is given in verse 33, 'Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is'. For the next thirty-five years these men would carry in their minds knowledge of the imminent and barbaric destruction of the Jewish people. Their voices as they preached the gospel were warnings to God's people both to avoid imminent physical disaster and escape from eternal spiritual judgment. The gospel of Jesus Christ is still the way of life for sinners. Lord, give us ears to hear!

A man on a journey

Speaking to His four disciples; Peter, James, John and Andrew, the Saviour brings this day's teaching to an end by describing a householder who takes a journey and leaves his house in the hands of his servants. He commits to each one his work, and instructs the porter, or doorkeeper, to be alert to protect the property. This is a suitable picture of Christ, soon to return to heaven, and His church. The departure of the householder must not produce carelessness in his absence, but provoke anticipation for his soon and sudden return.

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The attention of the Apostles as they watched for warning signs of Jerusalem's destruction and alerted the church against the rise of false Christs and false prophets remains a suitable activity for the whole church today. The Lord is coming again and His return will bring judgment for some and glory for others. Let us not be deceived by imposters! We, His people, are still called to be found serving in our Master's house as we anticipate His return: 'to every man his work'. The Lord's people are called to be heedful, watchful and prayerful as the time draws near.

A state of readiness

In our Lord's Day service we shall take up these calls to take heed, to watch and to pray and we shall remind ourselves what it is to maintain a state of readiness in the service of our Master, and why it is important. We shall note the authority that has been delegated to Christ's servants by the Master of the house, and consider His warnings against being found sleeping when He returns.

Amen

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