

Maranatha Mirror Message



WHO'S LISTENING?



When you hear talk about the end of the world these days, nobody laughs.

It's like watching a huge bridge with deep cracks in the foundation. Cars and trucks keep rumbling over it day after day while the engineers cry out, "This bridge is going to collapse!"

But who's listening?

Ocean levels are rising. Glaciers keep crumbling away. High winds are driving wildfires right down Main Street. The birds are disappearing. And the scientists tell us we're on our way to making this planet a place where nothing can live.

But who's listening?

And now the arms race is on again, while mad men rise to power in nation after nation. The generals keep telling their crazy masters to back off and be careful. One mistake can set off a nuclear holocaust that will turn the planet into a radioactive wasteland.

But who's listening?

What the scientists and the generals and all the movers and shakers don't understand is that God is still in charge. Yes, we are approaching the End, but a very different kind of End. The signs of the End are screaming at us on all sides.

But who's listening?

Jesus told of a time when wars and rumors of wars would accelerate, when famine and earthquake, false prophets and misery would multiply. When persecution would rise to new levels.



But who's listening?

*"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and put you to death;
and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.*

And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another.

And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.

And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold.

But he/she who endures to the end will be saved.

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony
to all nations; and then the end will come.*

Matthew 24:9-14

The End is coming, not because our stupidity and greed have destroyed the planet. No, the End is coming at a moment designated by the living God as our Day of Accounting---

When God's Word in all its glory breaks into this sad world and begins to make all things new



God has been warning us through his street-level prophets that the time is near. These prophets aren't flying around in Lear jets, wearing fancy clothes, or making a money-pitch on Christian radio. No, they're out among the people. These prophets are flawed like the rest of us. They make some wacky mistakes. But their message is powerful, and we began to hear it in a new way about fifty years ago.

He looked like Fidel Castro sitting on the ground, leaning against a tree with a Bible in his lap. The junkies and dealers were baffled by his presence in the park. What's he up to?

Day after day he would sit in the same spot with his Bible and wait. "What are you doing here?" said the junkies.

"Jesus is coming back within five years."

"What did you say?"

"Jesus is coming back within five years."

Nobody laughed. The dealers and the junkies scratched their heads. There was urgency in his soft voice that made them uncomfortable.

Jesus is coming back?

Are you saying that Jesus actually did rise from the dead?

That he's coming back to call us to account?

How do you know?

The stranger made no attempt to prove anything. He put his message out there and let it hang in the air. "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear!"

Crowds began to gather around this stranger in the park. Soon there were hundreds every day listening to his warnings.

They had heard about Jesus all their lives. But this was the first time anyone ever spoke convincingly about Jesus actually showing up in our lifetime!

"Jesus is coming back within five years!"

Well, the five years passed. Then ten years. Twenty. Half a century has gone by since Brother Ralph first appeared in that park announcing the imminent return of the Lord.

Brother Ralph was just one among numberless heralds of the Kingdom who appeared in city parks, riverbanks, street corners and store fronts, all over the earth for a brief season.

"Jesus is coming back soon!" they cried.

It was a lightning flash of warning.

Then everything went dark again.

Actually, things have been getting darker ever since that brief season of light.

But now, in the growing darkness, the message is coming to us again. Heralds of the Lord's return are again beginning to appear all over the earth.

It's one thing to repeat in a creed that Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead. Or to sing it in a hymn. It's quite another to know in our spirits that it's actually going to happen----soon!



These heralds of the Kingdom are calling us to face up to something we already know in our spirits. While the evening news and the weather reports stir in us a vague alarm, we need to look beyond the news and the weather and pay attention to the voice of the Lord echoing in our own spirits.

**"THEN THEY WILL DELIVER YOU UP TO
TRIBULATION AND KILL YOU, AND YOU WILL
BE HATED BY ALL NATIONS FOR MY
NAME'S SAKE. AND THEN MANY WILL BE
OFFENDED, WILL BETRAY ONE ANOTHER,
AND WILL HATE ONE ANOTHER. THEN
MANY FALSE PROPHETS WILL RISE UP AND
DECEIVE MANY. AND BECAUSE
LAWLESSNESS WILL ABOUND, THE LOVE
OF MANY WILL GROW COLD. BUT HE WHO
ENDURES TO THE END SHALL BE SAVED.
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 24:9-14**

So what's the gospel of the Kingdom?

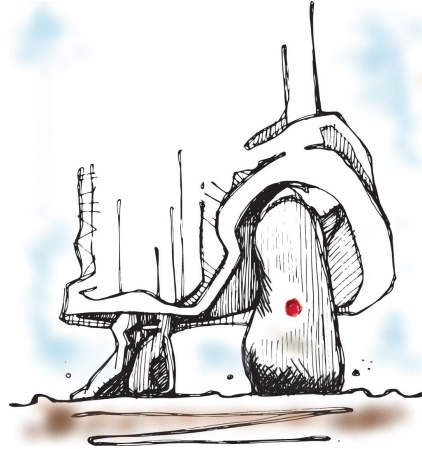
The gospel of the Kingdom is all about the arrival of the King who will make all things new.

It's a gospel---good news---because anyone can leave their old life behind right now and step into God's world--- into this new kingdom---and start breathing the air of the world to come.

For the Spirit of the King who will soon make all things new, is already among us to set us free from our misery and teach us how to walk with God.

"Follow me," says Jesus, "and you won't walk in darkness any more.

You won't be afraid any more.
You won't have to hide behind a mask any more."



" I will teach you how to walk with God. I will show you how to do things right. How to love your neighbor as yourself. So that when I return in glory, you will be worthy to inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

***"When the Son of man comes in his glory,
and all the angels with him,
then he will sit on his glorious throne.
Before him will be gathered all the nations,
and he will separate them one from another
as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,
and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left.
Then the King will say to those at his right hand,
"Come, O blessed of my Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."***

Matthew 25:31-34

And what makes you worthy to inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?

Is it because you got yourself saved?
Because you *belonged* to a church?
Because you *spoke in tongues*?

Because you *performed signs and wonders*?

No. You will inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world for only one reason: because you lived like a son, a daughter of God—in this way:

***I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me,
I was in prison and you came to me.***

Matthew 25:35-36

Of course this is how people *who are saved* are supposed to live.

This is how people *who belong to a church* are supposed to live.

This is how people *who speak in tongues* are supposed to live.

This is how people *who perform signs and wonders* are supposed to live.

***I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me,
I was in prison and you came to me.***



Not only are we commanded by our Lord to live like that,
we are empowered by our Lord to live like that.

When God pours out his Spirit upon us, it's not so that we float up there on a fuzzy cloud and pretend to be "heavenly magicians," with our signs and wonders and charismatic gifts.

No, God gives us his Spirit so that we can walk in the footsteps of the Master.

So that we can be there for the needy ones,
the forgotten ones that God sends across our path.

The good news is that the one who died on that cross for our sins, and rose from the dead as the Firstborn of the New Creation, will soon arrive to make all things new.

But before he can make all things new, Jesus will first call us all to account.

From Revelation 22

*And he said to me,
"Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book,
for the time is near.
Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy,
and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy."
"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense,
to repay every one for what he has done.
I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last,
the beginning and the end."
Blessed are those who wash their robes,
that they may have the right to the tree of life
and that they may enter the city by the gates.
Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators
and murderers and idolaters, and every one who loves and practices falsehood.*

The hour is late.

It's time for us to wash our robes in the blood of the Lamb.

To clear out the clutter.

To focus our lives on the one thing needful:

The Kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world.

The door to that Kingdom is open now.

The Lord of that Kingdom is in our midst.

The power of heaven is closer than our own breath.

All we have to do is open our hearts and receive that power afresh. And then, go out there and live like men and women who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.



And we need to do this while there is still time.

Prayer

Heavenly Lord, we are listening. We want to live like the true sons and daughters of God you are calling us to be. Lord we open our hearts to you, pour your spirit upon us, empower us with your mightiness and mercy as we follow your beloved footsteps, that lead to the hurt and broken of this world. Lord Jesus, even at this late hour, may we be found worthy to inherit the Kingdom.

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