

Howards Corner

Thoughts about what is eternally important.

In my younger years I was fiery and whatever I did was with passion though all of it was not directed in the best way but as time passed, I mellowed, and I changed drastically. This mellowing however came about because the Lord Jesus came into my heart and filled me with His Holy Spirit at about age 37. Although I had been a member of a Methodist church for about 20 years before that being a “pew warmer” with little understanding of the scriptures. This is like a lot I see in the Methodist church of today. Very little enthusiasm for the gospel but instead focused on “churchism” and ritual and formal religion. That is not the Jesus I met at my baptism in the Holy Spirit.

I then became passionate about the Kingdom of God. He began to change me and lead me to understand His ways. The Holy Spirit led me by His gentle ways and showed me His word over time. So, I am now 83 and I am still fiery, but it is about the work of the kingdom. I still have “fire in my belly” about teaching His word **correctly** and trying to get the church to look at where we are and where we are going. My eyes have learned to focus on eternal things and not so much on the temporary things of this world. **My eyes are on eternity.**

State of churches today

I do not see a lot of fire in the church of today. I am afraid the fire has gone out and we are coasting on ritual and traditions and trusting our past successes or thinking they were successes. There are individual exceptions, but I mostly ask, have we just gone to sleep and think that if we are a member of a church, we are safe and are going to heaven? Complacency is always a danger in anything you do. Do you not know that being a member of an organization church is not necessarily the same as being in the body of Christ? You must be born again. That is the definition of being a Christian. There is a “Lamb’s book of Life” in heaven and that is the book you want to be in and not necessarily a member on a church roll.

You do know that Jesus said some troubling things such as the way is narrow that leads to eternal life and few will find it. He further said the way is broad that leads

to destruction, and many will follow it. There will be the wheat and the tares. I believe He is talking about those that are in the organizational church because He says that the tares will grow alongside the wheat, and you will not be able to tell the difference until the wheat produces fruit and the tares do not. Therefore, I read this to say that some in the churches of today who do not do the real work of the kingdom and bear no fruit will be gathered at the judgement and thrown into the fire. Jesus also said that many in that day who said to Him Lord, Lord would not enter the kingdom. He also said that we must be more righteous than the Pharisees to enter the kingdom of God and the Pharisees kept the letter of the law fanatically but failed to understand the spirit of the law.

I urge all to diligently study His word and apply it into your lives. I am troubled that so many do not even read the bible at all or very seldom read, and an extremely small number really study. There is a lot of confusion in the churches today, many do not know the basic concept that we must be born again and that we are saved by grace and not by keeping the law or joining dead churches. God has hidden Himself in His word and only those that diligently seek will find Him.

Jesus said that He is coming back for His "True church", but He did not tell us when He is coming so we are to be always ready. If we are not ready, then we are given the parable of the ten virgins. Five were ready and five were not. Five were taken into the marriage supper of the lamb but five were left outside. The five that were taken had oil in their lamps and their wicks trimmed. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit so we should always walk in the spirit. You do not want to be the five that are left outside.

I hear no teaching much on the rapture (catching up) of the church. The church will be taken out of this world prior to the tribulation period which is reserved for Israel for seven years. The church will be taken out before this tribulation because we are not to see the wrath of God which is the tribulation period. It will be a great tribulation for Israel, and they will be tested by being put through a fiery furnace which will burn out the impurities and leave the remnant pure. This is then the second coming of Christ at the end of the "age of the gentiles". There will be no more gentile rule and the millennial kingdom of 1000 years will be established. This is also a judgement of the world at that time and a judgement of Satan.

All of this is taught in the bible but is not preached by many of the churches of today because the whole word is not preached. Prophecy is not taught because some churches theology is incorrect, and they do not think the church will be raptured or there will be a tribulation or that Israel will again be reestablished in the land of Israel and blessed by God at the end of tribulation and Christ's return. The theology is that Israel has been replaced by the church. Many churches do not bother to explain how they get these ideas. You must cut out a lot of scripture to believe such things. The problem is that it was thought up many years ago and because the clergy controls what the church hears you do not get the truth.

Do not be misled! There will be a rapture and there will be a last 7 years for Israel and there will be a tribulation and a final judgement. The bible gives scripture after scripture to explain these things. How many lessons have you heard on Daniel or on Revelation or Jeramiah or Ezekiel or Isaiah or Zechariah? Paul tells you plainly about the rapture and your eternal glorified bodies. Why are they not teaching these lessons? I think it upsets their theology and then they have no solid ground to stand on. The silence from the pulpits is deafening!

Replacement Theology and the end times

It is imperative for you to read and study for yourselves. All the prophecies of the bible will be fulfilled completely and that includes all the prophecies about Israel's future. I have studied diligently and when you read all the prophecies there is only one fulfillment that fits all the prophecies. The only way to have another theology is to eliminate these prophecies and say they were spiritual and not literal. The word of God is in harmony and when one part is left out then it is no longer in harmony. That is why it is a dangerous thing to take out parts of scripture because you do not like them, or you do not understand them, or you have invented a theology that they do not fit.

This is Replacement Theology one of these theologies that must leave out a lot of scripture to make it work. It says that the church has replaced Israel in God's plan. To believe this theology you must leave out at least half of the Old Testament and a lot of the New Testament. This concept came into being at a time when the church had blended into the Roman Empire and became a state church.

The Roman Catholic church then carried it on, and the reformation church kept it to some extent. The modern main line denominations have not questioned it and so it is believed today but is not taught why it is believed. Then came the nation of Israel in 1948 which destroys that theology. Replacement Theology was never true and has changed how the church sees end times and church rapture and the book of Revelation and Daniel and Ezekiel and other prophetic books. When you have a wrong theology, it distorts the truth and how we do Christianity.

Other misinterpretations of scripture

This theology usually goes with another misinterpretation of the scriptures which is Matt 25 31-46. Because the church thinks the church is to bring in the kingdom of God therefore have left out a lot of scripture which says otherwise.

Many people's theology changed to believe that these verses in Matthew refer to the judgement of the church at the end of the age and the second return of Christ and therefore the church is judged only on whether we fed the hungry and visited prisons and provided water to the thirsty. It leaves out faith and belief in Christ as savior and is not in harmony with the rest of the bible. However, this scripture is not about the judgement of the church but is the judgement of the nations of the earth after the return of Christ.

I have written on Matt 24/25 and Luke 21 at howardscorner.org/biblelessons **please go there to get all details but for this discussion I will tell you a little about these scriptures.** First to interpret these scriptures correctly you must understand scriptures are veiled and are taught in such a way that the believers will understand but the unbelievers will not. **Spirit interprets spiritual words but the natural interprets these as natural words.** There are three events described in these scriptures. They are written in a chiastic form which is a form where things are not written in logical consecutive order, but the first section is one part, and the last section is associated with the first. In this case the second and third section are associated together. So, if you do not understand that you will think they are flowing as one event.

[These scriptures cover these three events](#)

1 -Jesus said, “this great structure of the temple would be torn down and one stone not left on top of another”. This was the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem in 70 A D. This explanation is not in Matthew but is in Luke 21 where the armies are surrounding Jerusalem and they are told to flee.

2 -The second event is the second coming of Jesus to judge the world and to set up His kingdom on earth for 1000 years. These events are covered in two sections Matt 24:9-35 and Matt 25:31-46. You will notice that there is a skip from Matt 24:35 to Matt 25:31. This is the chiasm of the first and last sections. Matt 25:31 is distinctly a different subject from the section which ended in Matt 25:30. The new subject, which now is the judgement of the nations, after Christ return to set up his kingdom and he separates the sheep from the goats. This is plainly said in verse 32 that this is the judgement of the **Nations**.

This is where the misinterpretation happens because He is no longer talking about judging the church but is judging the nations of the world. Many uses Matt 25:31-46 to change theology to say, that the church is judged on feeding and caring for the poor and is the main purpose of the church which is far from the truth. Our purpose is to further the kingdom of God and preach the gospel to the nations. There is no mention of salvation by grace through faith in these verses which is the central message of the “gospel”. We will do good works but that cannot earn our salvation, but we will be rewarded for doing righteous works. Remember context and the context has changed from talking about the church judgement to judging the nations.

The first section of Matt 24:9-35 says plainly that there will be a tribulation period before Christ’s return as has been plainly taught in all those books that have not been taught. Replacement theology requires that all those prophecy books be hidden because it destroys their theology. The Catholic church hid all these prophetic books and all other scripture, and many denominations hide them today. Thank goodness knowledge is increasing and we can read and study for ourselves and the clergy cannot stop us. You and I may be asked to leave churches or more likely we will just be ignored if we persist in teaching these books but that is alright because we are not saved by church membership but by faith in Jesus alone for our salvation.

3 -The third event is Christ's coming back for the church prior to the tribulation period. The church will be judged at that point for our rewards and our lack of rewards. This section comes at Matt 24:36 through Matt 25:30. These are the two sections that are joined together in the middle of the chiasm. Christ will come suddenly without warning, and we will be caught up to Him in the sky- the dead in Christ first and then those who are living.

These times are described with Noah's ark and the Ark is a shadow/type of Christ being our salvation before destruction happens. You want to be in the ark of Jesus when He comes to get the church and before his second coming. Noah's ark has a double message. It is both the ark of salvation in Christ and the day of destruction which is the tribulation period which is to come shortly on the earth after the church is resurrected.

Two in the field and the two at the mill one taken, and one is left. The one taken will be with the Lord. The parable of the ten virgins is similar because 5 are taken and 5 left. The five are taken to be with the Lord. Those left will go through the tribulation which will soon come about for the world.

The parables of the talents and the servants are the church and those who served the Lord well and those that did not. Remember that the church is the body of Christ which is only those that are "Born Again" by grace by faith and not by our works. This description starts in Matt 24:45 and continues to Matt 25:30

This is then the judgement of the church. Those that have done good works in this world in the church and have been loyal to the word of Jesus and have born the fruit of righteousness will be given their eternal rewards and will rule and reign with Christ for a thousand years. He will say to us "Well done good and faithful servant. Enter into your reward."

I heard a well-known television teacher reading the Matt 25:31-46 verses as the judgement of the church and the reason we are to do good works. He did not say we are saved by grace through faith but implied we are saved by doing these works. It is also taught in mainline denominations, but no one is telling the whole story or telling why that is the central message of many churches. They are taking advantage of people with good hearts and little knowledge of the bible and make

them think that is the gospel. It is not. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus' shed blood on the cross and not by works.

Do not say I have not warned you. Study the whole word for yourselves. There are good teachers out there. Ignorance is not bliss. Daniel and Revelation are a must study along with the Old Testament profits and Jesus has a lot to say in Matt 24 and 25.

Our main objective is to make disciples of the nations and to operate in the Holy Spirit and if we do this, we will seek to help the helpless and feed them eternal food and show them the well spring of living water that Jesus told the woman at the well about. Without this wellspring of living water none of us are redeemed.

I use versebyverseministry.org which I think is excellent. They teach only the bible and not denominational teaching.

I pray you will diligently seek the truth from the bible and not to fit your denomination teaching or lack of it. If you sincerely seek the truth, then ask Him to show you the way. Remember the bible is in harmony and if you leave out any of it you will not find the truth.

Let us make sure we are on the same page as Jesus!

Howard