

Spent

Church
People

"When Will the End Be?"

7/9/61
AM
Bailey

Scripture Lesson: -

Text: - Matt 24: 1-14

Introduction: - Troubled people on every side are asking questions like this, "What is going to happen? Is the end of time near?" "Why does God permit immorality, and evil and war to continue?"

Well, the Bible does say very emphatically that God does not permit evil. The Bible speaks of the "mystery of iniquity". There are many mysteries concerning evil, war and Communism that we do not understand. When we say that God permits evil, we do not charge him with causing it. He is not responsible for evil. He simply withholds the obstacles and impediments which would prevent the evil.

Pilate illustrates the truth. He tried to compel Christ to speak. Pilate wanted to know whether Christ was indeed the Son of God. And when Christ answered him nothing, Pilate cried out "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above."

Here we have a statement that God is sovereign, ruling over all the evil acts of men. Every corrupt political power is permitted power that is allowed to men by God for a purpose. Khrushchev and Castro

could not possibly rule apart from the permissive will of God. In some mysterious and wonderful way God is working out purposes that are beyond our comprehension. It should be a source of comfort to perplexed Christians today to realize that the hand of God is on the throttle of a careening and crazy world.

There is much Scripture to confirm God's control over men's affairs at this point. The Psalmist wrote, "His kingdom ruleth over all," and "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee." We shall never have the right view of the world's agony and distress until we realize that a sovereign God permits these things to happen. Even when he allows evil men to plan and execute evil, he retains control and uses the evil for the furtherance of his own plans and his own glory. In other words, the Communists will not be permitted to go any farther than God allows them. He may have purposes of chastisement and judgment that the nations of the West need. The threat and challenge of Communism may be used in some mysterious way to bring about a spiritual revival among Christians everywhere.

Let us allow men to judge

See

We are told in 2 Chronicles 32:31 that God took his hand off King Hezekiah at one time to try him and to show him "all that was in his heart." In the Psalms God says, "So I let them (Israel) go after the stubbornness of their heart, that they might walk in their own counsels." Hosea speaks for the Lord, "Ephraim is joined to his idols: let him alone." In these and other Scriptures we find the

loving God allowing men to go into sin and evil that they, and the world, might learn the necessity of obedience to God. The Bible teaches that God permits evil and directs it to ends beyond men's understanding and at utter variance with the designs and desires of the wicked.

The crucifixion of Christ seemed to be the most terrible tragedy the world had ever known. And yet God used this seeming defeat to bring about the greatest victory the world has ever known. All the peace, joy and rest of the soul; all the hope of life beyond; all the victory over sin in this present world, have their source in the death of Christ at the hands of sinful men. This is still God's method of operation. Many of the seeming defeats in this world turn out to be glorious victories when looked at from God's point of view.

III.

God also determines the bounds of evil. "Thou hast done evil, as thou couldst." Jer., 3:5. As we look over the world in its present chaotic condition we are tempted to think that there are no limitation on evil today, no restraint from God on the diabolical plans and deeds of evil minded men. We seem to be hastening toward the end. Freedom is being threatened all over the world. Reports filter in of continual suffering and persecution in Cuba at the hands of power crazed men. Missionaries are being driven out of the Congo, and maltreated.

Christians are being murdered by the revived Mau Mau in Kenya. Children are being taken from their car-

ents in East Germany and taught that there is no God and no moral law. It almost seems that this evil day offers no restraint from God; but at this point we are wrong.

God has himself provided the greatest hindrance to evil. His Church, individual believers, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, is that restraining power.

As this living church responds to the leadership of God's Spirit, it stands in square opposition to every godless force at work in this generation.

If you would take the Church out of America, you would see what kind of a nation it would be when unrestrained. If it had no restraining force it would be a hell on earth.

IV.

God also uses one nation to correct and chastize another. The prophet Habakkuk saw that Israel was about to be invaded by the Chaldean army. Again and again he cried for deliverance. Finally the Lord revealed to him the purpose of the permitted invasion, "O Lord, thou hast ordained them judgment; and O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction." Because of Israel's idolatry and unfaithfulness to the living Lord, God was allowing the heathen Chaldean army to move in and chastise his people.

The Scriptures teach that God is unchanging, and what God did thousands of years ago to Israel because of her sins, he may do it to us as a nation today. We have more Bibles, more churches, more religious institutions than any other people in history. We have also sinned ~~more~~ against light, more opportunity and more advantages than all other nations of history. God may well allow a godless na-

tion to chastise us in the days ahead.

Conclusion:- We are living in an hour of emergency
Where should a return to the Lord of hosts begin?
It must begin in the hearts of the people of God;
in the hearts of you who know Jesus Christ. The
church must repent of her sin and begin to live a
disciplined life in harmony with the will of Christ.
Today is the hour for repentance, humility and
faith. Let us turn to God while there is still
time.

There is still hope. You can come to Christ. You
may be the one to whom God is speaking and waiting.
God is waiting for every sinner to be saved thru
grace before world judgment begins and the door is
shut forever. Will you come? Just now?