

HUE AND CRY: Faith Overcomes Fear

by Mark Huey posted 21 February, 2006 www.outreachisrael.net

In recent years, months, and even weeks, the threats to world peace have been on a dramatic rise. The increase of “chatter” on different communication mediums from known terrorists around the globe has done much to accomplish its goal of instilling fear in the hearts of millions. Nearly daily, the airwaves are clogged with intimidating messages that are often followed by horrific acts of violence rapidly broadcast within hours into the homes and hearts of the viewing and listening audience. The human emotion of fear is being exploited almost beyond measure. While this age-old tactic is not new, it continues to have a traumatic affect on those who are influenced by its nefarious objectives.

Some might declare that “civilization as we know it” is at a crossroads headed for destruction. But if we are completely honest, the world has been in this predicament many times in the past. Within the last few decades, one should readily recall a time when the stated foreign policy of the United States and the Soviet Union was something labeled: Mutually Assured Destruction. Since the advent of the Nuclear Age, the possibility of literally eliminating entire nations has loomed heavily on the minds and hearts of those in positions of potentially triggering such a ghastly action, not to mention the lowly citizens who simply try to digest the insanity of these policies.

Today, with the possibility that weapons of mass destruction are in the hands of extremists who have the will to use them on others, members of the human race are posed with a predicament of potentially cataclysmic proportions. This can be frightening to anyone who is manipulated by the fear tactics of evil people. But what is more insidious to the faithful, believing community is the attempt by those who “claim to be people of faith” who use fear of the unknowable to link current world affairs to end-time scenarios, thereby further instilling fear. People of faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob should not be fooled. After all, it is clear from the words of Yeshua that the day and the hour of the prophesied “Day of the LORD” is known only by the Almighty:

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father *alone*” (Mark 13:31-32).

Nevertheless, men have always been curious about the End of the Age. In Matthew 24, the followers of Yeshua questioned Him about the signs at the End of the Age. His exhaustive answer should help calm any modern-day fears of the faithful as He gives His listeners some clues as to what to expect when the end is near:

“As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things happen, **and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?**’ And Yeshua answered and said to them, ‘See to it that no one misleads you. **For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Messiah,” and will mislead many.** You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for *those things* must take place, **but that is not yet the end.** For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. **Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.** Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come. **Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains**” (Matthew 24:3-16).

In this classic passage, Yeshua first answers His Disciples with a warning about those who will come to mislead His followers. In fact, many of those who will mislead actually come in His name declaring that He is the Messiah. In other words, many of those who will mislead the brethren may be “Christians,” who are either ignorant or deliberately misleading.

Secondly, Yeshua states that His followers will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars **but that this is not the end.** In fact, if you are a student of world history, you will know that wars and rumors of wars are an integral part of mankind’s legacy down through the centuries.

Next, He states that nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and that **in various places** there will be famines and earthquakes. Then, in a qualifying statement, Yeshua declares

that these different events are merely the “beginning of birth pangs.” Whether these things are human initiated wars or natural disasters that occur with different frequencies at different places down through the ages, they are simply like the false contractions that occur prior to a woman ready to give birth. But it is not necessarily the actual birthing process. Certainly down through the centuries, humanity has been experiencing “birth pangs” that are emblematic of the “end of the age.”

At this point, Yeshua turns what could be considered the preliminary events that lead to the Great Tribulation when He speaks about a time when “they will deliver you to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name.” “**All nations**” is the key term. While we have seen many individual nations persecute Christians down through the years, we are not at the point when *all nations* turn on the Christians. Additionally at this time of tribulation, there will be a great apostasy that Yeshua describes as a “time many [when] will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another.” Certainly today, we do not see this great falling away from the faith on a global scale, although many individuals have fallen prey to denying the Messiah.

Yeshua then warns His listeners about many false prophets who will arise and mislead many to damnation. This will be coupled with an increase in lawlessness, and a hardening of the heart that leads to a love that grows cold. Additionally, Yeshua states that it is imperative that His followers persevere to the end in order to be saved. Finally, before declaring what will be the ultimate sign of His return, He states that the gospel will be preached to the whole world for a witness before the end will come.

After you have read Yeshua’s preliminary comments that answer His Disciples’ questions about the End of the Age, you finally get to Matthew 24:14-15, which describes the event that will trigger the Great Tribulation. According to this direct quote from Yeshua, it is absolutely certain that the Great Tribulation or Jacob’s Trouble (Jeremiah 30:7) He speaks about will not commence until the “Abomination of Desolation” has occurred. This is an indirect quote from Daniel 9:27, which makes it clear that a functioning sacrificial system upon the Temple Mount in Jerusalem will be initiated in order to have it terminated:

“And he [the antimessiah/antichrist] will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week **he [the antimessiah] will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering;** and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate” (Daniel 9:27).

The Apostle Paul says that this man will set himself up as God in His Temple:

“Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

Until we witness the reconstruction of the Third Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, we are not to be in constant fear about the beginning of the Great Tribulation. However, when we do witness the building of a functioning Temple in Jerusalem, the admonition is to then be mindful that its cessation will trigger Jacob’s Trouble.

With this being said, how should we as “people of faith” be reacting to tactics of fear that emanate from various media outlets—or more importantly—those within the “believing community” who are making predictions and prognostications that are clearly premature?

First, it is important that we maintain an awareness of what is being stated by those who would seek our harm. But we should not let fear paralyze us from going about our Father’s business of sharing our faith with the lost and hopeless. In fact, the prevalence of terror dialogue in the marketplace gives each of us ample opportunities to share the “hope” (Colossians 1:27) that is within us to many who come across our paths during the course of the day.

Secondly, we should continue in the final command given by our Redeemer to make disciples of those around the world. This has never been countermanded and assures us that He will be with us to the End of the Age:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

Thirdly, we should be mindful of the often-subtle attempts by religious people to use fear to

manipulate us for their personal agendas. We are not to be a people of fear, but rather a people of faith who rely upon our belief in the Holy One and His Word to maintain a witness to the world. Let us always remember what the author of the Hebrews states about the subject of faith, and how our walking in it pleases our Heavenly Father:

“Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible...And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Hebrews 11:1-3, 6).

Surely in these troubling times, we have a responsibility to be a people of faith rather than a people of fear—knowing that by our faith, we will please God.

Perhaps one final thing we can each do when we notice that we are being affected by fear of the unknown, is to pray for an additional measure of faith:

“For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a **measure of faith**” (Romans 12:3).

If we can demonstrate this faith, perhaps our increased faith will guide us to the One to whom our fear should be directed:

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

Through wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, we by faith will recognize fear and overcome it, whether it comes from the world or from within our very camps.

Until the restoration of all things...

Mark Huey (B.A., Vanderbilt University in History and Graduate Studies at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University) is the Director of Outreach Israel Ministries (www.outreachisrael.net). He is the author of several books, including: *TorahScope, Volumes I & II*, and *Counting the Omer: A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot*. He is also co-author of *Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study*.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard, Updated Edition* (NASU), © 1995, published by The Lockman Foundation.