

Teaching for 10-24-07

Interpreting This “God-Season”

Jesus warned His followers about correctly interpreting the changes in *God-seasons*. He chided them for their ability to track the movement of storms in nature, but yet their lack of ability to sense the movement of God. In Luke 12:54-56 (*The Message*), He says:

“When you see clouds coming in from the west, you say, ‘Storm’s coming’—and you’re right. And when the wind comes out of the south, you say, ‘This’ll be a hot one’—and you’re right. Frauds! You know how to tell a change in the weather, so don’t tell me you can’t tell a change in the season, the God-season we’re in right now.”

There are many things happening around us right now, but are we seeking the Lord for His correct interpretations of those things? When our nation has experienced some of its greatest disasters (flooding, hurricanes, fires, and tornados) during the last few years, are we paying attention? Are we discerning anything when 43 percent of our nation is in severe drought conditions?

And on the world scene, we have never experienced the current conditions that should cause alarm. Nations are racing to acquire nuclear weaponry, placing all of us in the most precarious position ever in history. The United States and Israel have been declared enemies of radical movements, with the intent of bringing destruction. Regardless of your “end-times” theology, one still has to notice that conditions are ripe for another worldwide holocaust. Even President Bush has warned of the potential of World War III.

What Is God Saying?

These kinds of issues are hard to deal with in a balanced way. Often those who claim to know how to interpret the times end up being wrong—and thus appearing foolish to others. So rather than risk looking foolish or possibly offending others, we avoid the topic of interpretation of the signs of the times. Yet Jesus is obviously suggesting that the people of God really should be capable of knowing the “seasons.” In fact, Jesus called the people “hypocrites” for not knowing how to interpret the times in which they lived.

Throughout history God allowed people to know the *God-seasons*. In Luke 2, Simeon and Anna had been walking in close fellowship with God for years. They were in the right place at the right time when Jesus the Messiah was born, and they knew exactly what they were witnessing when the Baby Jesus was brought before them. They looked for His coming, perhaps at the risk of looking foolish to others. But they knew how to watch and listen, noticing what God was doing in their world. They did not miss their *God-season*.

As we look around at our own times, are we able to discern this *God-season*? Before you are quick to declare that God has no part in disasters or precarious times, remember the words of the Lord to Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:13:

At times I might shut up the heavens so that no rain falls, or command grasshoppers to devour your crops, or send plagues among you.

In Solomon's prayer of dedication of the Temple, he links the sin of God's people with possible defeat in battle, drought, famine, and pestilence. God responds by using very direct language to indicate that He is entirely willing to bring disaster so that we might turn back to Him. This is not to say that every natural disaster or catastrophic event is a judgment from God. Yet we need to pause and ask if the patterns in the world might represent more than just coincidental occurrences. Are we missing something—and should we be seeking the Lord for greater insight and understanding?

Whatever your view of the events of our days, there seems to be a desperate need for those who will help us look carefully at what is going on around us in this season. Under the teaching and anointing of the Holy Spirit of God, we need leaders who will guide us into understanding what our response should be in tumultuous times. May we not let the fear of extremism cripple us as the people of God from being skilled by God to interpret our *God-season*. Not paying attention to or skillfully interpreting the times might prove to be our worst mistake in these fascinating days. We invite you to seek the Lord with this prayer:

Holy Lord of Grace, we confess to You that we know little about what Jesus said of interpreting our times and seasons. We pray that You will teach us how to do that in a way that is according to Your heart and Your wisdom. Guard us from extremes of judgmentalism, as well as the fear that paralyzes us from seeking to understand. Lord, in these days we need to be a people taught by You to interpret our God-season. Help us to do that in the mighty and powerful name of Jesus, Amen.