

Terrorism, Violence, Riots, Anger, and Hatred Continues to Rise and Dominate the News Coverage, Should We Be Surprised? Let's See

Headline, here today gone tomorrow. No sooner had the news become mesmerized covering the horrible events of the racism in Charlottesville, VA. of the beatings riots and the running down and murder of a woman in the path of ground zero that day; that it had to drop that news to follow up with a new more exciting story of the comments by President Trump. That quickly took a back seat to the recent horrific multi-terrorism attacks in Spain.

All of this news put the stories of Korea threatening a nuclear strike in Guam, or Iran continuing to test its missiles, or China threatening the U.S. if we strike first to protect ourselves. All of these stories quickly moved to the back burners to make way for the next news headlines. Oh yes, what ever happened to the Russian story?

Should any of the headlines filling the pages of the news, the internet, or the social media surprise any in the Church of God Community? Probably not, especially if you have been in the church for many years. From my earliest memories attending the church I can recall the warnings that the church taught from Scripture to cry aloud and spare not. These same warnings are as alive and required today as they were in 1971 when I came into the church or even 2,000 years ago.

While the specific day by day events are not foretold, the fruits of the spirit of man at the end time are clearly spelled out. We were told that there will be wars and rumors of war, famine, pestilence, lovers of self, brother against brother and on and on it goes. The news headlines today are simply reporting the fruits of man produced by living that evil way.

From the beginning of Jesus' ministry, these warnings were the central focus and the very core command given to the apostles and later passed along to the church. Notice what Matthew records immediately following His being tempted by Satan: *"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Matt 4:17)

John the Baptist preached the same theme before Jesus' ministry began. John came to prepare the way for Jesus and preached the very same message. *"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Matt. 3:1-2)

The apostles after Jesus' crucifixion

and resurrection Him, obeyed those commands, by continuing in those same warnings. "And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matt 28: 18-20)

Notice the apostle Paul's message to the Thessalonians: *"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:"* (I Thess. 4:15-17)

I look back over the years to the time that I would hear the information I just shared with you, that they would preach over and over again. I would simply turn it off and tune it out. As soon as I would hear that theme that I would tell myself, here we go again, I've heard it all before, wondering when will they ever get off this kick? Ever felt that way? How about now, feel that way now?

We have a merciful God who understands our human nature. Jesus knew 2,000 years ago that the Kingdom of God wasn't going to take place then. Yet, He lit the fire for the warnings and gave them to His disciples and every generation from that time until today were given signs that His return could take place in their lifetime, just as the apostle Paul felt when he wrote to the Thessalonians. He then commanded them to keep the fires burning for each generation that

would come after Him.

The warning message is but one of those ways that God uses to call new converts and keep the fire going. Human nature is funny, when everything is going well for people, they simply don't feel the need for God. But through concern, alarm, tragedy, they reach out for God to intervene for



Terrorist attacks in Barcelona, Spain

them. But that is only the starting place. We must go on from there to a maturity level in our love of, and love for God. Through that growing process our mind and nature gradually changes.

At some point in our spiritual transformation, we no longer obey God's truth through concern or fear, but out of love and appreciation. Does the message of warning change at that point? Of course not, the message will not change. The only thing that changes is in how we receive it.

I must admit, I went through a period that I was tired of hearing the warnings, and the cry aloud and spare not sermons. Funny how human nature reacts. The very message that lit a fire in my heart reached the point that it was a mere ember, and I became bored with it. Have you ever felt that way, maybe you've been there too. Maybe now. God knows and understands those emotions, yet, at the same time He also tells us we are not to say there. We are admonished to return to our first love. *"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."* (Rev 2:4)

God's desire for us is to always be in our first love with Him in our calling. That our lives be continually filled with the excitement, joy, and zeal, of that first love, only He wants us to do so with the spiritual maturity of the mind of Christ.

God's Fall Feast, Keeping the First Love Burning

There are many ways God uses to give us that renewed zeal, one of them is through His Holy Days. The Fall Holy Days will be upon us very shortly.

Feast of Trumpets will be on Sept 21; picturing the return of Jesus Christ who will rule on this earth for a thousand

years. ***Atonement*** Sept 30, picturing putting away Satan for a thousand year. And the ***Feast of Tabernacles*** will be Oct 4-12; giving us a "type" of the millennial reign with Christ for the thousand years. On each of these days, the church will keep these annual Sabbaths as commanded by the Eternal with services on them.

This year we are blessed to have over 45 speakers at the various sites. I've also been blessed to be able to arrange my flights to visit each site. I've had the opportunity to sit in on a few of the phone conferences held by the various Feast Coordinators this year. I must say, there is tremendous enthusiasm and excitement by everyone striving to bring you a tremendous and fulfilling Feast.

As I write this, we are busily working to bring you a new update of the work that can help us move into a new multiscreen visual appearance for our weekly ***News, Nuggets, and Insights***. This past year we were able to upgrade the software on our equipment that opened up tremendous possibilities. We've talked about it for a while, it is just about to come to pass. I'm praying we are able to get a demo ready for you to share at the Feast this year. Please keep it in your prayers.

Have a great Holy Day,
Sincerely, Your Brother in Christ,



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