

April 5

Scriptures: Read Mark 13

Key Verse: “And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.” (Mark 13:10)

Overview

Prophecy is a hot subject these days. Especially as we’ve just entered the 1990’s, the last decade of this millennium. There are all kinds of self-made prophets out there, ready and more than willing to predict the future. Then there are the Bible’s prophecy experts, all preaching their interpretations, so various that the sum total is decidedly uncertain at best and confusing at least. What really complicates the picture, though, is that these prophets and their followers tend to take it personally whenever an unbeliever, or proponent of a competing prophetic scheme, questions the validity of their teaching. Some of the most dogmatic opinions extant in Christendom today are those of end-times specialists. For these peoples, the expression “knowing everything for sure” seems to be axiomatic.

That’s why Jesus’ words in verse 32 of this chapter are so very vital, “But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, not the Son, but only the Father.” When God became the man Jesus, He emptied Himself of the independent exercise of His divine attributes – and one of those attributes is omniscience. Jesus, the God/Man, was self-limited. So much that even He didn’t know when the end of the age and the Day of the Lord would be. So if He didn’t know, how can we, mere mortals, expect to know? If you want to speculate, do so as an exercise, not as a dogma.

There is, however, one thing Jesus says that tends to be measurable rather than speculative, as we attempt to interpret this chapter. It’s the statement in verse 10, “the gospel must first be preached to all the nations”. This is something that has never been possible except in the last half of this century. The preaching of the gospel by way of radio and television is reaching more of the world than ever in history. Nevertheless, according to the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelism, there are still thousands of people groups in the world who have never heard the message.

So if you want to expend some energy and embrace a preoccupation that is not counter-productive in this area of prophetic interpretation, try evangelism. The very best thing you can do is speak of Jesus to your neighbor. Jesus, after all, is the Spirit of true prophecy (Rev. 19:10b).

Prayer

Lord Jesus, the testimony about yourself is the Spirit of prophesy. Grant to me the great honor of testifying to someone today. Amen!