

IS THE WORLD COMING TO AN END?

Matthew 24:4-13 (KJV)

- ⁴ *And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.*
- ⁵ *For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*
- ⁶ *And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*
- ⁷ *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.*
- ⁸ *All these are the beginning of sorrows.*
- ⁹ *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*
- ¹⁰ *And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.*
- ¹¹ *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*
- ¹² *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*
- ¹³ *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*

Jesus foretold what to expect before the end of the world in the context of the Olivet Discourse. Jesus does not want anyone to deceive us (v. 4); instead, Jesus wants us to be aware and alert. Currently, we are hearing of wars and rumors of wars, and we do not know what to expect if the United States and Russia engage in warfare. Inflation will probably be one of the consequences, and this is disturbing because we are already experiencing the rise of prices seemingly in almost everything we purchase.

Moreover, we are currently transitioning from a pandemic to an endemic. An endemic does not mean the cessation of the pandemic, but it suggests, for example, that Covid-19 is maintained at a base level and can be managed. In other words, many believe that Covid-19 will continue to exist but not as devastating as it was in the last two years.

Jesus discussed wars and rumors of wars, pestilences (such as Covid-19), and other problems in Matthew 24:4-13 as signs that the end of the world is near. However, Jesus encouraged believers not to be troubled (v. 6) and informed believers to recognize that “these are the beginning of sorrows” (v. 8).

When we look at our current world from Jesus’ perspective, we can conclude that the world is coming to an end. Thus, we should live each day holy and joyfully recognizing the possibility that each day could be the last day.

WORSHIP CELEBRATIONS

Our two in-person Worship Celebrations are on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. (the North Campus) and 11:00 a.m. (the South Campus). Everyone (especially people who are elderly and physically disabled) is encouraged to arrive at least 10 minutes beforehand to be seated safely and comfortably. Temperatures are checked, hand sanitizing is urged, social distancing is applied regarding where people shall sit and walk, wearing a mask is mandatory, utilization of restrooms is restricted to 2-4 people at a time (depending on the size of the restroom), and congregating before and after Services is prohibited.

If you have any Covid symptoms (such as cold or flu) or if you have not completed at least 5 days of quarantine after testing positive, please view and participate in our online worship via YouTube rather than in-person worship along with many others who choose to worship with us through live streaming.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February is Black History Month, and we should be mindful that Black people invented so much that we enjoy today. Black people invented the following: potato chips, gas mask, protective mailbox, blood bank, improved ironing board, home security system, refrigerated trucks, three-light traffic light, automatic elevator doors, electric microphone, tissue holder, color IBM PC monitor, peanut butter, automatic gear shift, clothes dryer, dustpan, folding chair, golf tees, ice cream scooper, lawnmower, lawn sprinkler, modern toilet, the mop, reversible baby stroller, and so much more.

Black people have contributed (and still do contribute) so much to our country's success; therefore, all of us have a responsibility to teach our children (and to teach others) the facts about Black History which will help Black people appreciate being Black and other races of people appreciate Black people.

TITHING DEMONSTRATES OUR LOVE FOR GOD

We learn in the Bible that tithing is an important part of faith for those who follow God and that tithing (10 % of our gross income/increase) should be money we set aside before paying anything else. We have observed that Jesus endorsed tithing and that tithing began before the Mosaic law. We have learned that tithing enables believers to experience a harvest (abundant blessings), and that tithing empowers

God's church to minister effectively, that tithing is a step of faith. We learned last week that people are "cursed with a curse" when they fail to tithe which is a consequence of robbing God.

Today, we need to know that tithing demonstrates our love for God. People who really love God live to please God by doing (at least desiring and trying to do) what pleases God and what God commands. For example, Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15). Personally, I love God, and one of the ways I demonstrate my love for God is by faithfully tithing my gross income/increase which I have been doing for many years.

At St. John, we currently give in person during Sunday Morning Worship Celebrations, by mailing or dropping off our tithes and offerings at our Administration Building or South Campus, or by giving online through our website (sjmbc.org). Let's demonstrate our faith with our Tithes and Offerings.

OUR DAILY BREAD

Thursday, February 24: Numbers 11-13; Mark 5:21-43
Friday, February 25: Numbers 14-15; Mark 6:1-32
Saturday, February 26: Numbers 16-17; Mark 6:33-56
Sunday, February 27: Numbers 18-20; Mark 7:1-13
Monday, February 28: Numbers 21-25; Mark 7:14-37; 8:1-21
Tuesday, March 1: Numbers 26-27; Mark 8:22-38
Wednesday, March 2: Numbers 28-29; Mark 9:1-29
Thursday, March 3: Numbers 30-31; Mark 9:30-50
Friday, March 4: Numbers 32-33; Mark 10:1-31
Saturday, March 5: Numbers 34-36; Mark 10:32-52

MEMORANDUM

Building Fund Pledges: We still desire to construct a multimillion-dollar **Family Life Center**, adjacent to our current sanctuary at the North Campus, which will consist of a gymnasium, game room (for the youth), and weight room. Many of us made a pledge that we fulfilled, but some have not. I personally thank those of us who have already fulfilled our pledge and others who have made "Building Fund" contributions. I encourage everyone (if you have not already done so) to participate financially (in full or installments) as soon as possible in this building project by choosing one of the following tiers:

- 1) \$10,000.00 or more
- 2) \$5,000.00 to \$9,999.00
- 3) \$1,000.00 to \$4,999.00
- 4) \$500.00 to \$999.00
- 5) Below \$500.00

Weekly Activities: I strongly encourage everyone to participate in the St. John activities that benefit you. In regards to each of the following activities, visit our website at sjmbc.org if you need more information. What's forthcoming?

Sundays:

- **Worship Celebrations** at 9:00 a.m. (North Campus) and 11:00 a.m. (South Campus)
- **Online Church School** at 2:00 p.m.
- **Online J.A.M. (Children Fellowships)** 2nd and 4th Sundays at 4:00 p.m.
- **Online Lord's Supper** 1st Sundays at 7:00 p.m. To participate, each believer will need bread or a cracker and grape juice (or something similar).

Mondays:

- **Preparation For Grocery Giveaway** at 10:00 a.m. (South Campus)
- **Online Women Missionary Ministry (General Mission)** 4th Mondays at 6:00 p.m.

Tuesdays:

- **Grocery Giveaway** (North Campus and South Campus) at 12:00 p.m.
- **Online Church Leadership Council** Tuesdays before 3rd Sundays at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesdays:

- **Online Prayer** at 12:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.
- **Online Church School** at 7:00 p.m.

BIBLICAL RECAPITULATION

Based on Matthew 24:4-13, **the world is coming to an end**, so we should live each day holy and joyfully recognizing the possibility that each day could be the last day. Also, we learn that **tithing demonstrates our love for God**.

May God bless and sustain each of us.

Your Servant In Christ,

Dr. Kevin B. Hall, Pastor