

## Understanding the Times

### Opening Text: Luke 19:28-34, 41-44

Jesus was about to visit Jerusalem one last time. A visitation of Jesus was about to take place although they *did not know the time of their visitation* (v.44).

May God never find any of us...

- unaware of time and
- unaware of how desperately we need a fresh visitation of Jesus! I believe that our world needs a visitation of the power of Jesus!

### 1. Understanding the times

The people in Jerusalem missed the day of God's greatest visitation to our planet. They missed a time like no other, a special, unique time when the Messiah, the very Son of God visited the earth. It is so important that we understand our time.

**Romans 13:11** - *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.*

**1 Chronicles 12:32** - *the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, and of what Israel had to do.*

**2 Timothy 3:1** - *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.*

These are the days that as we read in **Romans 8:22**, "*creation groans with birth pains*"!

We are living in unprecedented times. All that Jesus said that would happen at the end of time is happening right before our eyes. I believe that it is time to turn to Jesus and invite an end-time visitation of His power! People need the Lord, our world needs Jesus! Our world needs a visitation of the power of Jesus like never before!

### 2. It is time for a fresh visitation of the power of Jesus

As read in our text today, Jesus was coming to Jerusalem for the **last** time. It was His last visitation. A fresh visitation of the power of God now could be a last visitation because it is late in the calendar of God.

**Jesus was visiting Jerusalem for the last time.** They had seen His miracles before, but God had reserved the best for last. The last visitation was going to be the greatest. It was going to accomplish more than any previous visitation:

The greatest miracle ever, was going to happen through the cross Jesus was going to redeem mankind out of the grip of satan. Deliverance, forgiveness, healing, and

eternity was going to be extended to all of us. That was a greater miracle than any they had witnessed before.

God tends to reserve the best for last so it wouldn't surprise me if in these end times, we would be graced with one last visitation of the power of Jesus like never before! We have been promised *later rain*, a last outpouring of the Holy Spirit – let us cry out to God for that, let us desire that!

### 3. Visitation requires preparation

Jesus sent out for a colt to be brought to Him. Some things had to be in place prior to His last entrance. Scripture had to be fulfilled and that little colt was going to be a part of it. The Lord needed it. He sent His disciples saying, *the Lord has need of it*.

#### a) *The Lord has need of it*

The same way Jesus needed to have certain things in place before His final visitation to Jerusalem, He needs to have certain things in place for a visitation today. What does the Lord need today? What needs to happen so His power may invade our hurting world?

The Lord needs? A sovereign God has needs?

God is indeed sovereign but right from the days of Adam He has chosen to work with man. He also worked with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua. He worked with Gideon (*sword of the Lord and sword of Gideon*), etc.

When it comes to the plan of salvation for mankind, God chose to work with us and entrusted us with the gospel – not angels, but the church. Jesus needs us!

**Matthew 24:14** - *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

**Reinhard Bonnke** in his book "Time Is Running Out" (p. 102) mentioned something very interesting about William Carey, the famous missionary to India:

*William Carey "was a young English minister, burning with the thought of the Great Commission. Yet there was nobody leaving England to go onto foreign fields. On the occasion he suggested to a group of Baptist ministers that they discuss the subject. The chairman of the group, Elder Ryland, replied to his proposal, **young man, sit down! You are an enthusiast. When God pleases to convert the heathen, He'll do it without consulting you or me**". Elder Ryland's ideas were typical of the times. God was thought to do what He wanted without consulting anybody or being prompted.*

No, God works with man.

#### b) Every time Jesus had a need, someone was used to meet that need

- Someone provided the colt,
- Someone provided a boat so Jesus could preach from the shore,

- Zacchaeus provided bed and breakfast
- Someone provided a room for the Passover meal (the best room, a large room, furnished, in the upper room... the best)
- The man with the pitcher provided a sign and the water for baking the Passover meal the next day (Luke 22:10)
- In Luke 8:2-3, women provided of their substance.
- In our opening story, Jesus did not call a chariot from heaven to enter Jerusalem. He drew upon the resources that were already available here on earth.

Yes, God is sovereign but He chose to use our hands too. It is not all in God's hands:

- Jesus told the disciple to find "*the man with the pitcher in his hand*" (Matthew 26:18). He had something in his hand that provided direction for the disciples
- God said to Moses: *what is that in your hand?* (Exodus 4:2). That rod provided deliverance, signs and wonders
- Acts 19:11 – *Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul*

c) The Lord has need of it: I believe we need to be mindful of the needs of Jesus

**Philippians 2:20-21** - *For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.*

**Matthew 25:34-40** - *Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'*

**37** *"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

Jesus identified with the needs of our hurting world.

**Romans 10:12-15** - **12** *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13* *For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." 14* *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15* *And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"*

There are 5 questions here and only one answer: The church needs to embrace the needs of Jesus.

When the church engages in the great commission,

- Missionaries are sent
- People will be able to hear

- They will believe
- They will call on the name of the Lord and will be saved

There are still at least 3250 people groups in the world that remain unreached.

86% of Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims in the world don't personally know a Christian.

d) The Lord has need of it – so what are we going to do about it?

One could argue, *but Lord I don't have much to offer. I am not greatly qualified; I don't have much except...*

Jesus accepts our “excepts” and makes them exceptional!

- In **2 Kings 4:1-6** there is a woman who said to the prophet “*your servant has nothing at all, except a little oil*”. What followed was an amazing story. This woman faced an impossible situation and had nothing... except. God turned her “except” into something “exceptional”.
- In **Luke 9:13 (KJV)**, we read “*But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.*”
- Moses had a rod (**Exodus 4:2-5**)
- Sampson faced with the Philistine soldiers had a jawbone of a donkey (**Judges 15:14-16**)

### **Conclusion**

We are coming to the end of the age. The Lord has need of you and me – of our time, talents, gifts, resources. We need to live with a sense of urgency and live for Jesus!

- May we be aware of the uniqueness of these times we are living in right now,
- May we desire, pray and position ourselves for a fresh visitation of Jesus
- May we ask ourselves, what does Jesus need right now?