

Wars and Rumors of Wars

"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. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Matthew 24:6, 7, 27

These are the words of Jesus when His followers asked Him what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the world. Further reading in the Bible tells us that conditions in the world will continue to get worse and worse and that the world as we know it will come to an end.

I well remember the euphoria in much of the western world when communism fell in Russia and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s. Some naively imagined that the decades following would begin a new era of peace and goodwill among the nations. Some wondered what could go wrong since the United States was the only superpower left.

History since has repeatedly illustrated the truth of Jesus' proclamation that wars and rumors of wars will continue. Even as communism was falling, the United States became involved in the Persian Gulf War. The bombing ended, but who would claim that the Middle East would continue experiencing true "peace"? In 1992 violence broke out in Chechnya, a part of southwestern Russia that was demanding independence. In 1994 and 1995 Russia sent troops to the region and fought a bitter war. In 1999 violence and then war again came to Yugoslavia, part of the region known as the "powder keg of Europe." In the first decade of the twenty-first century violence and wars continued to escalate around the world. The war in Iraq seemed to drag on and on.

In light of Jesus' prophecy and present-day reality, is there any hope for a war-torn world? According to the Bible there is!

In Matthew 24:12, 13 Jesus said, *"Because iniquity [sin] shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."* The only long-range hope in a turbulent world comes from surrendering our lives to Jesus Christ. Then we have the promise of living in peace with Christ at the end of this life and at the end of the world.

Christians today offer the world its only hope of light and peace. In Jesus' well-known Sermon on the Mount, He reminds Christians: *"Ye are the salt of the earth ... Ye are the light of the world ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 5:13, 14, 16).

That means that you and I can bring peace and hope to our own little corner of the world by accepting Jesus Christ and following His teachings. The Sermon on the Mount teaches us much about right living, peaceful living even among our enemies, and right relationships in the home, the church, and the world around us. The rest of the New Testament reconfirms and enlarges on Jesus' way of peace. When surrender to Christ changes the lives of men and women, that influences society for the good. The Christian realizes that he has purpose in life—to be a good influence and to fulfill Jesus' words in Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

We know that wars and rumors of wars will continue, because the majority of the world will not accept the teachings of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. But we can have hope and bring hope to the fearful and discouraged people around us.

We know that world politics has not brought peace. Technology and prosperity have not brought lasting peace. These things do not change people's lives. Join me today in surrender and obedience to Christ, the Author of peace, now and forever.

~Roger Berry