Are Futurists pessimistic about revival in the last days??

It is often felt, I know, that those of us who hold to what is called a 'Futurist' position on prophecy, that is, we believe that the Lord Jesus will return to this earth after the three and half years of the 'Great Tribulation' and the destruction of the Antichrist and the conversion of Israel, and then instigate His 1000-year reign on earth, are full of pessimism and unbelief regarding God's ability to send revival to the overthrowing of the wicked trends so manifest today before our eyes.

Believing as we do that the prophecies of the Bible are to be understood literally, except where obviously they are figurative, we believe that the character of the last days will be exactly as the Lord Jesus has revealed both in His own words and those of the inspired prophets.

Character of last days

One example is sufficient to show just what prophecy depicts for the final days of this age. We refer to the words of the Saviour Himself. "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed," Luke 17:26-30.

The dark days of Noah and Lot are to replicated world wide just prior to the return of Christ. That is what the Lord says. The world is to get more and more wicked just as it did in Noah's day. "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them . . . . GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them," Genesis 6:1, 5-7.

That same decline into darkness and rebellion was seen in Sodom. "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. . . . . And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it," Genesis 13:13, 19:12-13.

Here then, in plainest terms, were the spiritual and moral conditions in the world in Noah's day and Sodom in Lot's day. The Saviour says thus it will be just before His return.

Departure begun

Furthermore, we believe that the departure of the last days has begun amongst us.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth," 1 Timothy 4:1-3.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away," 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

If we are correct in believing that the latter-day apostasy has begun amongst us and the embryonic kingdom of the Antichrist is to be seen in the developments in Europe and the Middle East, then we are not to expect revival in the nations any more than was Noah or Abraham and Lot to expect revival in their days.

It has been said and prayed by many sincere and good Christians that even in the face of the terrible departures and declines of this age, God is able to send revival. That is a statement in which there is very much truth. However, God is not able to send revival in contradiction of His own revealed truth.

I recall once preaching on the subject: "Something God cannot do!" on the text: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began," Titus 1:2.

God CANNOT lie! He cannot do that which is contrary to what He has revealed He has purposed for the closing days of this age!

That being so, God cannot tell us that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived," (2 Timothy 3:13) and ask "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) without us concluding that the end of this age will be one of ever darkening wickedness, to combat which God will not send revival to turn away the nations from their sin.

That is not being pessimistic but rather realistic in the light of God's truth. It is not of faith to expect revival when God has promised judgment!

Now having said that we are not to expect a revival in these last days whereby the nations shall be turned from the apostasy which has been embraced by church and state, the people of God can expect the Lord to visit them and enable them by His grace and blessing to pass victoriously through these terrible times of darkness.

Just as 'the three Hebrew children' (Daniel chapter 3) were sustained amidst the fiery furnace by a mighty visitation of the Lord so it will be with the Church of the blood-washed in the last days.

As God heard the cry of Israel in Egypt and prepared His people for the trials ahead, just before the Exodus, so I believe that He will awaken, revive and strengthen His people for the evil times just prior to His return.

One passage in particular has often come to my mind when I think of that time. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps," Matthew 25:5-7.

Here is a stirring among the professing people of God just before the Bridegroom comes again. For this revival every true Christian should be praying and expecting.

But for a visitation by God that will turn away the nations from their present God-rejecting course we ought not to be expecting, for that would require God to act contrary to that which He has revealed to be His purpose in the last days.

Ivan Foster.

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