

The End is Come

“Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD unto the land of Israel; An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land” (Ezekiel 7:2).

This is a message heard throughout the Bible: one for all ages, including today. God’s people were repeatedly warned of a coming judgment but they refused to listen, much less repent, which is what God was calling them (and us) to do. Even after the northern kingdom (Israel) fell to Assyria—a sure sign of God’s intent—Judah continued to refuse. Jeremiah subsequently warned Judah for 20 years about an impending invasion from Babylon to no avail. After Babylon’s first attack on Jerusalem Jeremiah advised the Jews to surrender before it was too late, *“...serve the king of Babylon, and live...”* (Jeremiah 27:17). They scorned Jeremiah for his unfounded alarm being that they were safe within their own borders and that they were God’s chosen people. They believed that they had a birthright to their land and to their faith. Hananiah, a false prophet within the temple, rebuked Jeremiah *“in the presence of the priests and of all the people”* (Jeremiah 28:1) saying that there was no concern: God would preserve Judah and would cause Nebuchadnezzar to return both the captives and the stolen temple properties. Rather than consult God’s word, the people blindly sided with Hananiah because he was one of them who spoke comforting words.

Ezekiel continued Jeremiah’s unpopular message of repentance, signifying that God’s word does not change. When Ezekiel began preaching, he and some of Judah were already in captivity. He reminded fellow captives of Jeremiah’s previous warning that Jerusalem would fall. Amazingly, they remained unimpressed in spite of being in captivity themselves. He spoke of the wickedness of Judah *“the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence”* (Ezekiel 7:23). In a vision he saw into the hearts of the spiritual leaders of the day, *“...Son of man, seest thou what they do? Even great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here...”* (Ezekiel 8:6), *“And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door”* (Ezekiel 8:8). Behind heart’s-door were all manner of secretly-held beliefs showing how those responsible for the purity of the doctrine, the elders, conspired to twist doctrine and to hide truth from the people, *“...Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his*

imagery? For they say, The Lord seeth us not: the Lord hath forsaken the earth” (Ezekiel 8:12). He also saw hearts that venerated nature, *“...behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz”* (Ezekiel 8:14) and still others that worshipped the stars, *“...with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east”* (Ezekiel 8:16). Such beliefs might be expected in pagan religions, but they were surprising coming from those who outwardly worshipped the living God, *“Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here?”* (Ezekiel 8:17). Moreover, the people did not recognize the false preaching that they heard for what it was or the error of their own way. They just knew that they disliked Ezekiel’s preaching.

Today we still hear of a coming judgment and of the Biblical signs leading up to the end of time. Will we listen or be like the Israelites of old who rejected God’s call to repent? Because all people are sinful, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23), our sins must be forgiven before that day arrives. Old Testament sins were confessed before a priest who sprinkled the blood of a sacrificial animal to *“...make an atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him”* (Leviticus 5:10). Forgiveness was accorded to those who God was able to awaken to sin and who voluntarily confessed it before a priest, *“And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD’S offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments”* (Exodus 35:21). God uses the same means of forgiveness today with one exception; the blood of Christ permanently washes away past sin.

The Day of Judgment has been proclaimed from many pulpits in many churches for many generations. The Old Testament spoke of impending judgment. Today, the end-time forewarnings are all about us—again, a sure sign of God’s intent—and people are as unconcerned as they ever were. We are not safe just belonging to a church nor are we safe just because we believe we are. God owes us nothing but He offers eternity in heaven to all who will answer His call. God’s Peace,

Charles Korhonen

July 1	Ken Storm	Holy Communion
July 8	Matti Vailitalo	
July 15	Ken Storm	
July 22	Charles Korhonen	
July 29	Ken Storm	

Church Cleaning:
Matt and Nola Olson

Summer Schedule
Church at 10am
Bible Study at 7pm on Wednesday.

TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH
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Online Broadcasts

From our webpage: <http://www.tapiolachurch.org/> you will see the mixlr live audio – we will be 'on the air' during our church services. Previous sermons will be archived and available on the web.

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