**Title:** What to expect when you’re expecting (Matt. 24:1-14) – Signs of the End

1. Jesus said that we can expect the world to be off-balance. (vvs. 6-8)
2. Politically off-balance (vvs. 6-7a) *“wars & rumors of wars”*

***1 Thes. 5:1-3*** – Paul says talk of “peace and safety” is the signal of Jesus’ return.

***Rev. 6:1-2*** – The Antichrist will arrive on a white horse offering peace.

Research the number of wars currently occurring.

***Matt. 10:34*** – The crowd attempted to force Jesus to become King.

***John 6:15*** – Jesus stated He did not come the first time to bring peace between men.

1. Geologically off-balance (v. 7b) *“famines & earthquakes”*

***Luke 21:11*** – Luke call these events “great signs.” The term for “signs” is also translated “miraculous” (NLT).

***Romans 8:22*** – God’s Creation is groaning for restoration.

***Romans 1:25*** – Humanity has caused the damage to creation through our rebellion.

***James 4:2*** – Our refusal to go to God for the satisfaction of our needs causes us to fight with one another.

***1 Thes. 5:3*** – Paul also uses birth language to describe the approach of the end.

1. Jesus said that we can expect the world to oppose us. (vvs. 4-5, 9-12)
2. Through false information (v. 4) *“misleads you”*

***Luke 12:48*** – Greater information leads to greater responsibility.

1. Through false direction (vvs. 5, 11) *“I am Christ”* and *“many false prophets”*

***Acts 5:36-37*** – The Pharisees recognized examples of false messiahs.

***1 John 2:18*** – John the Apostle warned the number of false messiahs would increase the closer we get to the end.

***Rev. 13:12*** – The succession of false prophets will complete with one final false prophet who will direct people to worship the Antichrist.

***John 8:44*** – A false prophet is following the source of lies.

***Matt. 23:16, 24*** – False prophets are blind and lead blind people.

***Matt. 15:14*** – False prophets and those who follow them will both fall.

Doctrinal issues under attack:

* Inspiration and inerrancy.
* The full deity and humanity of Jesus.
* The historical reality of miracles including the virgin birth of Jesus.
* The bloody sacrifice of Jesus as our substitute and its sufficiency to pay for our sins.
* The resurrection of Jesus in a physical body.
* The personal return of Jesus to this earth.

***Matt. 16:24*** –Jesus said following Him would require taking up our cross.

***Matt. 4:17; Luke 13:3*** – Jesus said following Him requires repentance.

***John 16:8*** – God’s Holy Spirit provides conviction.

***Isaiah 6:9-13*** – A prophet’s job is to tell people they need to repent.

1. Through false affiliation (vvs. 9-10, 12) *“many will fall away”*

Lyrics of John Lennon song:

*“Imagine there's no heaven, it's easy if you try; No hell below us, above us only sky. Imagine all the people living for today. Imagine there's no countries, it isn't hard to do, nothing to kill or die for and no religion too. Imagine all the people living life in peace…”* – *Imagine*

***John 8:12*** – Jesus is the Light in the darkness.

***John 14:6*** – Jesus is *the* Way, *the* Truth and *the* Life.

***Acts 4:12*** – People stood on the steps of the very same temple and proclaimed that salvation was found *only* in the name of Jesus.

***Acts 9:16*** – Jesus told Paul he would have to suffer.

***2 Cor. 4:17*** – Whatever suffering a disciple of Jesus endures is small compared to the reward Jesus will give.

***John 6:53-54*** – Jesus calls His disciples to “eat His flesh” and “drink His blood.”

***John 6:66*** – Not everyone can handle the call to suffering.

***Dan. 11:35*** – Persecution has positive effects.

***1 John 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:10*** – Persecution identifies Jesus’ true followers. Pretenders will walk away.

***2 Cor. 12:10*** – Suffering causes us to rely on God.

***2 Tim. 2:3-4*** – Persecution causes us to focus our priorities.

***Matt. 10:34-39; Mark 13:12*** – Knowing the source of persecution will be family and friends makes the persecution even more painful.

1. Jesus said that we can expect the world to create opportunities for us (vvs. 13-14).
2. Opportunity to testify about our true nature (vs. 13) *“endures to the end.”*

***Mark 4:17*** – Endurance gives evidence a person is actually a child of God.

***Mark 13:12*** – Family becomes the source of pain.

***2 Tim. 2:12*** – We will be rewarded with authority in Jesus’ kingdom because we endured.

***2 Thes. 2:4, 7*** – Paul commended the church at Thessalonica for their endurance.

1. Opportunity to testify about the true Savior (v. 14; Luke 21:13-15; Mark 13:11) *“this Gospel shall be preached.”*

***Matt. 28:18-20*** –We have a mission to fulfill.

***Rev. 14:6*** –God will send an angel to declare the Gospel worldwide.

***2 Tim. 2:10*** – Paul faced great suffering so that the Gospel would get to the elect.

***2 Tim. 4:3-5*** – Paul warned Timothy that people would increasingly refuse to hear the truth.

***2 Tim. 4:7-8*** – Paul used himself as an example of someone who endured suffering to accomplish the mission.

***James 5:7-8*** – James gives examples of those who patiently endure with the hope of a good end.

Historical examples of endurance:

*“I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast vouchsafed [to allow or permit, as by favor or graciousness] thus to honor me. I am God’s grain, to be ground between the teeth of wild beasts, so that I may become a holy loaf for the Lord.”* – Ignatius, a pupil of John

*“Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and He has done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King who has saved me? You threaten the fire that burns for an hour and then is quenched, but you know not of the fire of the judgment to come, and the fire of the eternal punishment. Bring what you will.”* – Polycarp, a pupil of John

Tertullian said, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”