

The hour that you think not**BELOVED BRETHERN AND SISTERS**

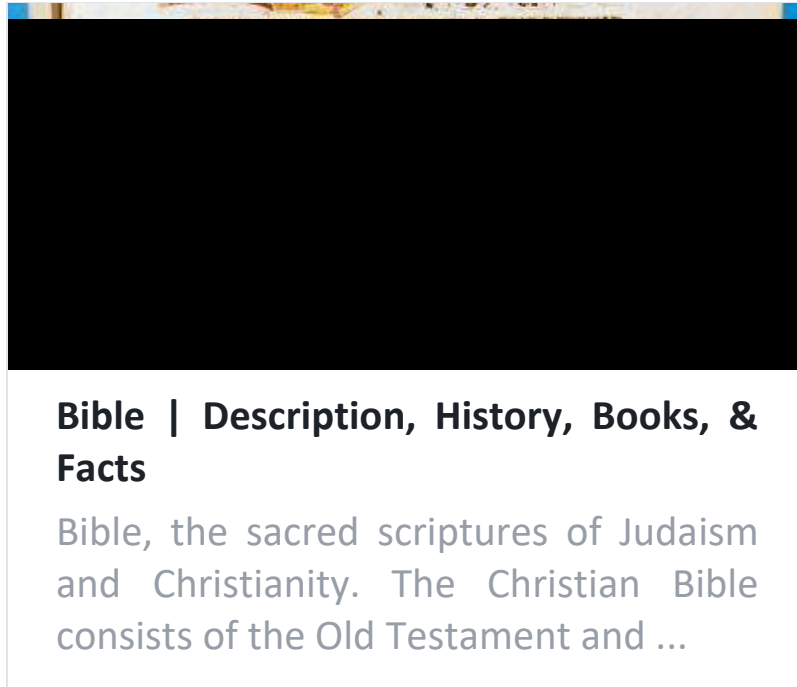
These are the words of the Lord Jesus himself and what a wonderful thing that these words, spoken over 2000 years ago, have been preserved for us; the very words that were spoken to His own disciples and prompted by the question of when He would return to the earth from heaven. He tells them that His return will be with power and great glory. It will be with a great sound of a trumpet to call all those who over the ages have known and understood the faith. Why does Jesus mention a trumpet when the majority are dead and buried? First there will be the judgement .

The sign is given of when it shall be of the fig tree which we understand is the Nation of Israel becoming established once more in their land and with all the Arab nations around them. This has happened in our generation by which we know that the return of the Lord Jesus is imminent. Jesus continued with a warning to be ready and the basis of acceptance and judgment will be how they have used whatever talents and responsibilities they were given. This he does with parables in the chapters that follow.

But there is much to learn from the previous chapter because of the failure of those then entrusted with the Law and called to be a special nation in God's eyes. Jesus commends Moses' words to them even as spoken by the Pharisees and scribes. But who were they?

In the 1st century, scribes and Pharisees were two largely distinct groups, though presumably some scribes were Pharisees. Scribes had knowledge of the law and could draft legal documents (contracts for marriage, divorce, loans, inheritance, mortgages, the sale of land, and the like). Every village had at least one scribe. Pharisees were members of a party that believed in resurrection and in following legal

traditions that were ascribed not to the Bible but to “the traditions of the fathers.”



Jesus, whilst in the Temple, commended their words because they were of Moses but not their actions and he listed many of their faults but in the main that they were hypocritical. In that Jesus found great sadness:

Mat 23:37-39 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

But there is serious danger for us also who are called that we can have a form (show) of godliness but that it is not a power in our lives.

Jesus at that time told his disciples also how to address one another and the demeanour they were to have toward one another. It was

then in the mount of Olives that they asked him about his return and the end of the world (aion or age). They understood that with Jesus' return there would be drastic changes. He warned that there would be many false Christs (and there are today as there have been over the ages), many churches and sects purporting to hold The Truth. But because iniquity shall abound many will lose faith; it is described as losing love in Mat 24:12-13 *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.* (see 2 Thess 2v3-13 for the rise of the Catholic church and in particular the papacy. The pope posing as God).

Then Jesus tells of what is to happen in Jerusalem and that many false Christs will arise but makes it clear that Christ's second coming will be very apparent. This must be to the world in general but as far as those who have the knowledge of the Truth they will stand before Him in judgement; those who have died in that knowledge will be raised to judgment.

In Mat 24:36 we are told: *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.* It is vital then that we are always ready. The verses that follow make it clear that if we are not ready things will be wanting in our behaviour, in particular with regard to our attitude to our brethren and sisters that we love one another (there are nineteen references in the new testament giving this instruction). Also there are many concerning being ready for Jesus when He returns.

It is made clear that no one knows the day or hour but the signs of the times are given for our help to keep us alert and we do our best to meet every first day to remember the Lord Jesus and renew our vow to serve our Father in heaven with our whole heart.

Mar 12:28-34 *And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel;*

The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

Why did Jesus give him that answer? We are told that Jesus knew what was in man, John 2v25 (He could read their hearts and minds and see their motivations and that they were always trying to catch him in His words). Thus it would appear that Jesus could see that that man was not sincere.

So we find that there is always help in the scriptures and in prayer and we must value our special position as guardians and trustees of the Truth. Also we must be ready for the coming of the Lord Jesus

Love to all in Christ

Brother Ken