

WATCHING AND SERVING SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

INTRO: A major motivation Jesus used to inspire faithful service and holiness in conduct and character was the doctrine of His return. (MT. 24:42-46 NLT) The Apostles used this doctrine to ground their converts in many things: Grace (TITUS 2:11-13); Overcoming Grief (1 THES. 4:13-18 MSG); Staying Alert (1 THES. 5:2-6); Repentance (ACTS 3:19-21); Faithfulness (MT. 25:19-21); Shame (MK. 8:38); Worldliness (MT. 16:26-27); Moderation (PHIL. 4:5); Mortifying the flesh (COL. 3:4-5); Sanctification (1 THES. 5:23); Purity (1 JOHN 3:2-3); Endurance (1 PET. 1:7); Finishing strong (2 TIM. 4:7-8).

Last Days Summary

Rapture; Church seven years in Heaven; tribulation; second coming; Armageddon; Satan bound 1,000 yrs; millennial reign; Satan released; God and Magog; white throne judgment; new heaven and earth.

End Times Signs (DAN. 12:4 TLB)

Explosion of Knowledge: Travel (walking, horses, chariots, boats, trains, cars, planes, rockets, space age); communications (talking, smoke signals, telegraph, telephone, radio, television, smartphones, computers); rebirth of Israel 1948; Jerusalem 1967; temple in waiting 2010.

The Red Heifer (NUM. 19:1-10 NIV)

From Moses until the destruction of the second temple, nine Red Heifers were sacrificed for Israel's purification. The Old Testament law for purification required the ashes of a red heifer. There hasn't been a red heifer that meets the qualifications since the temple was destroyed in AD 70 until now! There are five qualified red heifers in Israel and if one stays qualified, it will be sacrificed during Passover 2024. Also, the tenth red heifer is to be prepared by the Messiah. There hasn't been a qualified red heifer for 2,000 years because there was no temple and there was no need for one. Could it be that we're living at a time when one is needed so the false messiah could officiate at its preparation?

Jewish Leaders Say

They have the land, blueprints, gold, silver and copper vessels, 95 lb. gold Menorah, foundation stones, a possible red heifer, and some undefiled priests in waiting and ready to be used to offer sacrifices when the third temple is built.

Abomination of Desolation (MT. 24:15-21)

Once built, the temple will be used to offer sacrifices to God until the middle of the week (3 ½ years) when the false prophet will put a stop to the worship and set-up the image of the beast to be worshipped. This is the epitome of all blasphemy.

The Point

If Jesus, Paul, and others used this doctrine to inspire faithful service and holiness 2,000 years ago, how much more must we now? The rapture can occur at any moment.

The Challenge (1 THES. 5:1-6)

There's a difference between watching and waiting. Watching implies action. It suggests being alert mentally and self-controlled. Waiting suggests inactivity which can make one vulnerable to worldly influences (2 TIM. 3:1-5 NIV).

CONCLUSION: As we draw closer to our Lord's return, we must stay alert mentally and be on guard duty. We must stay active in serving God and being watchful.