

A COURSE OF ACTION



NAVIGATING THE TIME OF THE END

All believers are expected to act on the teachings of Jesus. That's a timeless, universal truth and is how we worship God in spirit and in truth. It is also how we gain the wisdom necessary to be prepared for His return. It is **the** essential aspect of being ready which really has nothing to do with how one views the events of end time prophecy. With that being said, there **is** merit in understanding the things to come as we look for His return. If there wasn't, He wouldn't have told us ahead of time what to expect.

Behold, I have told you in advance. Matthew 24:25

Jesus makes this statement as He is describing to His disciples the events that will accompany His return. He expects those who are alive during those days to be prepared for them. He explained what will take place during those days for that very purpose. Since those days are upon us, we should give heed to what He has told us in advance.

When we look at the entirety of Matthew 24 and compare it with what happens when the seals of Revelation 6 are opened, we see a certain sequencing of events that will precede His return. In summary, the following things will happen in order and correspond to the opening of the first six seals.

1. The conquering of truth through deception.
2. A time of war.
3. A time of food shortage.
4. The time of war ends.
5. Believers are persecuted and martyred.
6. God intervenes to bring judgment

It would be beneficial to give a brief synopsis of each of these seals for the purpose of seeing the big picture. Doing so will also help in determining what a reasonable course of action might be.

1. Conquering truth through deception – This has been going on for decades primarily in the spiritual realm in the form of propagating the doctrine of demons. It's a multi-pronged attack against truth that's specifically designed to pave the way for the revealing of the man of sin. This is currently where we are in the progression of the seals.
2. A time of war – After the deception of the first seal has had sufficient time for gestation, the birth pangs begin. This is the time of wars and rumors of war described by Jesus when nation rises against nation and kingdom against kingdom. It will be a time of global chaos and unrest to the point that it will seem like it is the end has come but we are told that it's not the end, but rather, the beginning of the end.
3. Food shortage – The time of war will bring about a severe food shortage. Supplies will be interrupted and the concentration of people in the population centers will exacerbate the situation.

4. The war ends – After the time of global chaos has sufficiently weakened the existing power structures and created a leadership vacuum, the man of sin will perform supernatural signs and wonders that will restore order to the world. Those signs and wonders will deceive the people of the world into believing that he is God, and that he should rule over the nations.
5. Believers are persecuted – Those who are deceived by the man of sin will persecute and kill those who refuse to worship him as God. This war against the saints will begin when it becomes law that those who refuse to worship the image of the beast are to be killed. The process of discovering who will and who won't worship the man of sin is initially carried out through either accepting or rejecting his mark. No one will be able to buy or sell anything without his mark.
6. God intervenes with judgment – After a sufficient amount of time has passed for everyone to have decided whether they will worship the man of sin or reject him, God intervenes by causing a global earthquake and allowing people a glimpse into the spiritual realm which causes great fear among them. This is followed by the judgment of the seven plagues of the seventh seal.

We know that believers are exhorted to remain spiritually vigilant and alert and continue to walk in the light of the truth as we see the day approaching, but is there anything we can do, materially speaking, to be better prepared for these signs that Jesus told us about ahead of time? If we use the above summary of events as a general guide, the food shortage of the third seal that results from the time of war will likely be the first thing to affect believers materially. That time of war could also bring about a disruption in water and electrical services which should also be taken into consideration.

How much preparation should a person make for the food shortage of the third seal? The answer to that question is going to vary. Some people might not make any preparations ahead of time and will rely on God's promise to provide for their necessities. Others might approach the situation as a ministry like Joseph did in Egypt by stockpiling food ahead of time. The shortage of food in population centers will likely cause many to seek refuge in rural areas so those who live outside of the cities will likely have a ministry opportunity there as well.

The main thing to keep in mind as the time of food shortage takes effect is that God is our provider. There won't be any need to panic over the situation and we should all do what we feel led by the Holy Spirit to do. While there is no "right" course of action to take, it would be prudent to prepare for this eventuality in some measure, especially as the likelihood of war increases. Based on how the war comes about and its purpose, it's likely that it will be a relatively short war lasting between six months and a year.

Since food shortages are typically associated with wars, why did God make a special mention of it during this time of war and give it its own seal? I think that the answer to that question can be found in what is not affected.

And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and **do not damage the oil and the wine.**” Revelation 6:6

The olive oil and the wine are not to be harmed. Olive oil is what was used as a fuel to light lamps and wine represents the blood of the new covenant. Believers are the light of the world and the new covenant gospel of the kingdom is our message. Could it be that God has preordained the third seal as an evangelistic food ministry of sorts? It could very well be the last chance that people have to hear the gospel before the man of sin brings about the time of great tribulation. It's also in keeping with the character of God that none should perish. Does the third seal give special protection to those who are shining the light of the new covenant during that time of darkness? I think it's a distinct possibility. Whether that's the case or not, we are supposed to look out for the interests of others as well as our own. Preparing ahead for the purpose of sharing and ministering to others in need is a godly thing to do.

After the fourth seal is opened and the time of war ends, the fifth seal is opened which begins the time of great tribulation that's described in Daniel 12 and Matthew 24. The great tribulation will be a time when believers will be hated and persecuted because of the name of Jesus. The man of sin will deceive most of the people of the world into worshiping him as God and will enact a law that those who refuse to follow suit and likewise worship him are to be put to death. Needless to say, this time of tribulation will have a significant impact on those believers who hold to the testimony of Jesus.

This is the time when believers are called on to persevere in the faith regardless if it costs us everything, even our lives. Worshiping the man of sin by receiving his mark and worshiping the image is the sin of idolatry and those who engage in that sin will come under the judgments of the plagues. There is no justification for saving one's physical life by receiving the mark or worshiping the image. Those who understand and act on the teachings of Jesus know this. We are to set our affections on the eternal things of heaven, not the temporary things of this world.

What course of action should a believer take when the “worship or die” ultimatum becomes law? Outside of refusing to comply, I don't think that there is any singular course of action which is best. People should plan ahead as to how they're going to respond to that ultimatum based on what they discern that the Holy Spirit is leading them to do. I expect that some people will flee the population centers and try to evade enforcement of the mark and the image that way. Others will probably take up arms to defend themselves but that's not likely to be effective.

If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints. Revelation 13:10

Many will simply refuse to comply and be martyred. What's important is to realize this situation ahead of time so that this life or death decision doesn't come as a surprise. We are told of these things ahead of time for a reason.

After enough time has lapsed and everyone has made the choice as to whether they will worship the man of sin or reject him, the sixth seal is opened and God intervenes during that time of great tribulation in order to judge the idolatry of those who worship the man of sin. After the global earthquake and the heavenly signs of the sixth seal take place, Jesus opens the seventh seal and the judgments of the seven plagues begin.

Not all believers will see through the deception of the signs and wonders that the man of sin performs. Some will be deceived into believing that he is God and will receive his mark and comply with (worship) the image. The plagues are God's judgment of that idolatry and are for the purpose of causing those who were deceived by the man of sin to repent. After all who are going to repent have done so, Jesus returns and destroys the wicked.



Jesus has told us ahead of time what His return will be like. The things that He described are also reiterated in the opening of the first six seals. In order for believers to be ready for those days, we need to stay alert and persevere in the teachings of Jesus. A lifestyle of obedience to the will of God is imperative if we are going to fare well during those days.

There are also things that we can do in anticipation of the time of the end. We know that the coming time of war will lead to a time of food shortage, so that's something that can be prepared for ahead of time. Such preparation can be used as a witness to testify of the things that are taking place, and what it is that world events are leading to.

We also know that when the fifth seal is opened that believers will be persecuted and martyred. This is something that we should be prepared for mentally so that when we are faced with the life or death decision of receiving the mark and worshipping the image, it won't take us by surprise.

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine **and acts on them**, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.

Matthew 7:24-25