

The Need For Renewal

In Matthew 24, we read how the influences of the world cause God's people to:

- 1. Leave the faith (verse 10).
- 2. Distort the faith (verse 11; cf. Galatians 1:8-9; 2 Peter 3:16-18).
- **3.** Grow indifferent to the faith (verse 12; cf. Revelation 2:4-5; 3:15).

We must fight against the thinking and mindset(s) of the world (Romans 12:1-2) and do so day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

The Need For Renewal -Combat "Cultural Christianity"

As our faith and love grow cold, we stop fighting for "**the faith**" (Jude 3) and instead simply call for a "Christian culture."

There is a shift towards "Christian values" and "Christian principles" rather dedication to the revealed will of God.

The Need For Renewal -Combat "Cultural Christianity"

Cultural Christianity is exhibited by:

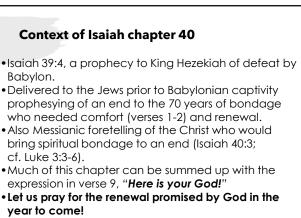
- 1. Names and labels rather than conduct and behavior. An affiliation rather than a belonging.
- 2. Key Christian principles (love, kindness) rather than commitment and sacrifice. Social over spiritual (Matthew 23:23).
- 3. Adaptable to modern times rather than standards once for all delivered (Jeremiah 6:16; 1 Peter 1:22-25).

The Need For Renewal -Combat "Cultural Christianity"

Cultural Christianity is exhibited by:

- 4. Responsibility is on "leaders" to address changes (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- 5. Focus on heritage (national or family) rather than personal accountability (Matthew 3:9; Romans 9:7).

How do we overcome such dangerous thinking? Through daily spiritual renewal (Ephesians 4:20-24; Colossians 3:5-10).



•5 steps outlined in this chapter ...

1. Focus on God's Glory and His plan to Redeem Man (verses 3-5)

- •Hope promised through "**the way of the Lord**" (verses 3-4; Malachi 4:5-6; Luke 3:4-6; cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12).
- •God's plan long ago established (Ephesians 1:3-6, "... to the praise of the glory of His grace ...").
- •Fulfillment to bring **glory to God** (verse 5; Psalms 79:8-9; Luke 2:14; Ephesians 3:8-10).

2. Believe In The Power of His Eternal Word (verses 6-8)

- In contrast to all things fleshly (Psalms 103:15-16), "The word of our God stands forever" (verse 8;
 1 Peter 1:24-25; Psalms 119:89). We need to shout ("call out") this from the mountain top!
- God's word is **divinely powerful** (Romans 1:16; Ephesians 6:17; 2 Corinthians 10:4).
- Note: Romans 1:14-16, Duty ... Eager ... Proud!
- Guaranteed to work (Isaiah 55:10-11).
- In times of turmoil, only "**God and ... the word of His** grace" will not disappoint (Acts 20:32).
- "Incline" and "apply" (Proverbs 22:17).

3. Remember God Is In Control and Leading His Flock (verses 9-17)

- We need to let the world know the good news! (verse 9, "Life up your voice mightily"; cf. Psalms 40:8-10).
- God's arm yet rules (verse 10; cf. Daniel 4:26-27; Psalms 66:7; 145:13) and **He yet sits on His throne** (Psalms 103:19; Isaiah 9:7).
- "Like a shepherd He will tend His flock" (verse 11; Ezekiel 34:12-16; John 10:3-4, 14-18).
- Trust God's power, understanding, and justice in the end! (verses 12-17; cf. Psalms 73:17)

4. Develop a spiritual focus (verses 18-27)

- "To whom then will you liken Me that I would be his equal?" (verse 25; cf. verse 18)
- Our God "sits above the circle of the earth" (verse 22).
- "Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars" (verse 26; Colossians 3:1-2).
- Application of **time and attention!** (Ephesians 5:15-17)
- We need **childlike trust** in our Creator and redeemer (Matthew 18:2-4).
- Don't worry! (Matthew 6:25-34)

5. God Gives Strength To The Weary (verses 28-31)

"Those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength" (verse 31).

What is our part?

- Focus on what needs renewing (Romans 12:1-2).
- Look to the "eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).
- Regular spiritual nourishment (1 Timothy 4:6; John 6:63).
- Fellowship with our brethren (Philemon 4-7).
- Eliminate the hindrances (Hebrews 12:1-2; Luke 10:38-42).
- Lay aside the "old self" (40:1-2; 6:7) and be forgiven (Colossians 3:9-10; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 8:23-24).

All Renewal Is Based On Forgiveness Of Sin ...

Without forgiveness, even as Christians, we are in the **bondage of iniquity** (Acts 8:23).

David prayed for a **renewed and steadfast spirit** that was dependent on his **iniquities being blotted out** and once again having a **clean heart** (Psalms 51:7-12).

Is your heart right with God?