

the

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“Do the work of an evangelist” - 2 Tim 4:5

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The Urgency of the Hour

by the Rev. Archimandrite Fr. Eusebius Stephanou, Th.D.

While we celebrate the first appearance of Christ in the manger, the message of His second appearance is of utmost importance for our time. There have been so many people asking about the times in which we are living and what is

possibly coming in the near future that I am presenting this past message from the late Fr. Stephanou which was written in 1987 and is more relevant than ever. Sincerely, *Joseph Abbate*.

It's not just another day. The hour in which we live is unique. Our generation is unlike any other. There is an urgency in the air. Ours is an apocalyptic age. The signs of the times are already in view. This is not apocalyptic sensationalism. It is simple reality we are already living. There is no longer any place for religious nonchalance. Yet, a false serenity prevails in the Church today. It is business as usual.

Treating the things of God can no longer be done in our usual nonchalant way. Can't we see the handwriting on the wall? What will it take to wake up the Orthodox? Our familiar religious lectures, panel discussions, even Bible study groups and conferences are proving ineffective.

Any Church activity needs the ingredient of Urgency and Vigilance in order to be challenging, thought-provoking and exciting. Only the evangelical and prophetic impact of the word of God can serve that important need. It cannot be done by means of our own ingenuity. To be specific, when we talk about urgency in the Church we are talking about the

urgency of Christ -- an urgency for salvation and deliverance by His atoning blood.

Danger from Within

The late Father Alexander Schmemmann in his February, 1972 report on the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America sounds the following warning: ***“Only a spiritually blind and insensitive man would deny that in spite of all her relative success, external and material, our Church is threatened with a danger from within: the danger of secularization, of a deep spiritual decay.”***

All of this points to the fact that we are living in an apocalyptic age. Too many do not agree with this. They show aversion to the notion that we are living in the last days. They oppose scornfully the idea we are approaching the close of the age. But this kind of attitude foments apathy. Besides, it runs contrary to the teaching both of Scripture and the Church Fathers.

Christ speaks at length about the end time and lists the “signs of the times.” ***“O, ye hypocrites, He said to the Pharisees, “ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” (Matt. 16:3).***

The most significant of the “signs

of the times” is the increase of rebellion against God and the resultant moral corruption. ***“Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (24:12).***

Paul also refers to the increase of evil: ***“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13).*** The apostle predicts the coming of the Antichrist as sin and moral decadence reach their culmination. He says the “mystery of iniquity doth already work” (2 Thess. 2:7), and that the program of Satan to dominate the world continues to unfold through history and will peak with the appearance of the Antichrist.

I have written at great length on how Satan is preparing mankind to receive the Antichrist. I explained how Satan has been making inroads not only in public education and in government, but also in the Church. As far back as the fifth Century St. John Chrysostom warns of the coming of the Antichrist. **He states that at the close of this age he will seat himself not only in the temple in Jerusalem, but in every Church (temple) (Homily III on Second Thessalonians).**

Peace, Peace!

The one-world government headed by the Antichrist which will control every aspect of man's life is closer than ever before. Have you noticed how “world peace” has become an objective universally recognized among the nations today? It is a common language everyone understands. The Arabs and the Soviets talk about it almost as much as the West.

Peace! Peace! Peace! The nations have become so alarmed over the prospect of a global nuclear war that it is now “world peace” at any cost. This

mentality falls right in place with Satan's program for the appearance of Antichrist who will promise to establish peace and harmony among nations. He will negotiate a peace treaty between Israel and the Arab nations. He will pretend that he has solved the problem of the Middle East.

Nations in their desperation to secure "world peace" will surrender their freedom to this World Dictator who will claim to be the Messiah. They will make peace an end in itself. Nations in their rebellion against God will not look to His Son Jesus Christ for the answer to survival and world peace. "Christ is our peace," the scripture tells us. Instead, they will accept the counterfeit Christ, the great Imposter and Pretender.

But we know there are two kinds of peace. There is the peace of Satan and there is the peace of Jesus Christ. The peace Satan offers is a false, deceptive peace. It is a snare to control the world and the lives of every man and woman. Satan will exploit the panic with which the nations will be stricken in their desperate quest for peace. †

Jesus alone is the answer to the need for world peace. He is the Prince of peace. By His atoning death He removed the enmity between man and God. He is the only source of peace, because He alone reconciles man to God and man to man.

Antichrist Peace Slogans

Ezekiel prophetically speaks of the seductive spirit of the Antichrist: ***"They have seduced my people saying, Peace; and there was no peace" (13:10).*** St. Paul likewise makes reference to that false and deceptive peace in his second epistle to the Thessalonians (5:3): ***"When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a***

woman with child, and they shall not escape."

I am wary of public figures who champion the cause of "world peace" without Christ and those who demonstrate against a nuclear arms buildup and advocate speeding up peace negotiations. They fall right in place in Satan's preparation for the advent of the Antichrist. We are told the only way to secure "world peace" is to form a one-world government. It is already envisioned by world leaders. It will serve as the substitute for Christ's kingdom.

What is sinister and alarming, however, is when Church leaders cry



out in the idiom of the secular world, Peace! World Peace! Without proclaiming Christ as the only answer to the world's quest for peace. They sound more like UN officials rather than messengers of Christ and heralds of the Gospel "which is the power of God unto salvation."

How can there possibly be peace without the Cross and apart from the lordship of Jesus Christ? Peace starts from within the human heart – not at negotiating tables! Peace without Christ is a trap of Satan. Church leaders who simply echo the peace slogans of the world are ready candidates for the end time alliance of the False Prophet with the Antichrist.

They are preparing the Church (not as the Bride of Christ, but as the Great Whore) to capitulate to the Antichrist when he makes his appearance.

Peace comes only with vanquishing Satan under our feet. It comes only when we are reconciled to the Father through the atoning blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. Peace is not the result of successful negotiations and peace treaties. Peace flows from love and love is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is a gift from God. The peace Satan gives us is at best a truce. It is a false and counterfeit peace. The peace the Antichrist will bring will conceal his true objective: to gain absolute control over every aspect of the lives of all men and woman.

A Shocking Realization

Never have there been so many signs pointing to the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only is the one-world government nearly upon us, but it will usher in the Antichrist as predicted in scripture. Developments are leading into the direction of a cashless society, and the banking industry's first world-wide, centralized, interactive computer will end the need for cash.

The world's largest computer called "the Beast" is beginning to store vital information about every man, woman and child in the industrial world. Microchips are being tested which would be implanted under the human skin. They would contain driver's license numbers and other information which scanner could read. Our freedoms are eroding at a rapid rate. There is a growing persecution of true believers all around the world. The day may soon be coming when you as a believer may be forced either to deny Christ or be persecuted for His name's sake.

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Thy Kingdom Come!

by Joseph Abbate / President

With all of the extraordinary events taking place at a blisteringly fast pace, many people are increasingly inquiring about apocalyptic fulfillment in Bible prophecy. Father Stephanou, who was extremely well versed on the subject would often share with me his eschatological teachings, both from the Bible and historical writings of the early Church Fathers. I can attest that what I am currently witnessing in the world as well as in the Church, are moving hand-in-hand in regard to End Time prophecy!

The Prophet Daniel in the ancient kingdom of Babylon had spiritually deciphered a vision of King Nebuchadnezzar. The King had a disturbing dream of a statue with a head of gold, the arms and upper chest of silver, a belly of brass, legs of iron and toes mixed of iron and clay, which ends up being toppled by a large stone which was uncut by human hands.

The Lord had shown Daniel that the statue represented the great kingdoms of the world. The head being that of Babylon, the arms being the Medes and Persians, the belly being the Greeks, and the legs being the Roman Empire. It is fascinating that the metal of the statue becomes stronger in structure yet losing intrinsic value at the same time. Gold being the most valuable metal, yet the softest, would never be able to be made into a sword because of its soft metallic properties. Iron is the strongest out of the metals listed, yet its overall monetary value is almost worthless.

Just how amazing it is that the legs are the longest part of the body, just as the empire of Rome had lasted for the longest time period out of all the empires. Remember that the Roman Empire had also split into two. The eastern part being called the Byzantine Empire. We have witnessed throughout history that the Roman Empire had a series of falls and rising again, such as with the rise of the Holy Roman Empire which lasted from the ninth century to the Napoleonic period. Brutal figures such as Hitler and Mussolini had tried to revive it. Even

Russia during the medieval period had tried to continue the eastern part of the empire after the fall of Constantinople. The Russian saying was: "Two Romes have fallen, the Third shall not fall." Yet it had also fallen into oblivion when the last Tsar (Caesar) had been murdered along with the royal family by the hands of the communists.

Another vision had been given by the Lord directly to Daniel in chapter 7. Four creatures are described, a Lion, followed by a bear, then a leopard, and finally a beast with ten horns. As with the vision of the statue, the four creatures also represent Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome.

A seal which had been placed upon Daniel's visions in chapter 9 of the book of Daniel is then broken and the books reopened by the Lamb of God in chapter 5 of the book of Revelation. Due to lack of space, I have to make a long story short. The period of history in which we are currently witnessing are the toes of the statue, being the European Union. A description of this is given in the 17th chapter of Revelation with the ten horns of the Beast. The Beast incorporating all of the great empires of the past into one final empire. During the end period of the "Last Days" the "Great Whore" described in the same chapter (chapter 17), sits upon the City of Seven Hills (Rev. 17:9). The city of Rome! The Antichrist may arise from territory that what used to be controlled by the ancient Roman Empire, even the Middle East. Then, a new league of states may arise from the toes of the statue.

The fulfillment of prophecy is truly uncanny! From the restoration of Israel to the final kingdom of the statue in the book of Daniel, also represented by the last Beast, being led by the Antichrist. Father Stephanou would sometimes share these Scriptures with me in detail during Bible studies. Another amazing fulfillment of prophecy is what is called the "**Mystery of Iniquity.**" "*For the mystery of iniquity does already work, only He who now restrains it, will do so*

until He is no longer in the midst." (2 Thess. 2:7). Through the ages, the Holy Spirit has been restraining the spirit of the Antichrist from coming to its eventual fruition. Many evil conquerors (antichrists with a small a), from the past have tried to establish a one-world government under their personal rule. But the Holy Spirit had not allowed it to be accomplished. The day will come when the Holy Spirit will reveal the real and authentic Antichrist when he manifests himself in the future (2 Thess, 2:3-4).

Even though St. Paul mentions the term "**Mystery of Iniquity**" in his own day, we have now seen how far it has come in two thousand years! This mystery has not only been working throughout the secular world, but especially in the Church. This is what has made it such a mystery. This does not only refer to historical heresies which had tried to creep into the Church during the earlier periods of history, this is referring to the compromising of the Church with the spirit of the Antichrist throughout history, finally resulting in the "*kings of the earth having committed fornication with the Great Whore*" (Rev. 17:2). It even results to the point that the Great Whore is described as "*being drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs*" (Rev. 17:6).

One may say that it is too much to comprehend. Yet, the Holy Scripture is the word of God! We have seen this in the historical past when the Church of Rome would hold crusades against other Christian sects it deemed as being against the Pope, such as the Cathars, Anabaptists and the order of the Templar Knights to mention a few. Tens of thousands of Christians were killed during the period of the Inquisition. The Pilgrims fled to the New World of America to flee religious persecution. William Tyndale was killed just for his translation of the Bible. Thomas Moore was killed by

the King for his uncompromising faith. Just imagine, the day will come that a compromised Church would eventually join in a politically correct message to the point that it would join in the secular call for peace along with the Antichrist. However, it will be peace without the Prince of Peace, it will be peace without Christ. There are many Christians that say this can never happen. Don't be surprised when you see the day when a large number of ministries may very well be shut down by institutions because they will be labeled as intolerant for just simply believing in the simple teachings of the Bible. In fact, this is already transpiring over the internet.

Christians have been martyred for centuries. Only the Christian community in America and some in Europe have been immune from persecution, but we are seeing the Mystery of Iniquity on the increase lately. **I have written about this matter before and write it again. Christians are not immune from persecutions, natural disasters or wars! I have no joy in sharing this with you, but all of these things will be increasing greatly in the near future!**

The idea to some that the Rapture will exempt us from these are both historically and scripturally incorrect. Now, don't misunderstand what I am saying. The Rapture will take place sometime in the future. Yet, some major wars, persecutions and disasters will arise beforehand. Though we are promised to be delivered from God's



wrath, remember, persecutions are not part of God's wrath. Look at how many Christians have already martyred around the world, not to mention during the Early Church period. Look at how many Christian soldiers and civilians

were killed in two world wars. The wrath of God which will be poured out to those dwelling upon the earth during the Great Tribulation period is so terrible that it is inconceivable to the human imagination. ***“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened”*** (Matt. 24: 21-22).

I fear that too many Christians are ignorant of this and may lose their faith when these trials arise in the near future. Remember the parable Jesus taught regarding the 10 virgins. Only half of them made it into the bridal chamber because the other 5 had not stored up enough oil in their lamps to get them through the midnight hour. Keep your lamps full of oil and stay prepared for whatever may come your way! The point of the message is to stay alert and vigilant. We may not know exactly when these things may come to pass, yet we know that God is with us now and in the future. He promised: ***“I will never leave you or forsake you”*** (Heb. 13:5).

Christmas and New Year's Greetings

All of us here on the Board of Directors of Saint Symeon Ministry want to wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a Wonderful New Year! It has been a difficult year to say the least. I'm sure that each one of you know of someone who has been effected by the Virus. People have either contracted the terrible virus or have lost job employment. Uncertainty regarding these days have often been disappointing and even scary at times. We have all been separated from family and in many states, prevented from even leaving the house. We must remember that the times were also difficult when Jesus had been born in Bethlehem. He

came in a time of uncertainty. When Jesus had witnessed His disciples troubled about the future events He had shared with them and reassured them with what He said next. ***“Let not your hearts be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also”*** (John 14: 1-3). Please let these words of Jesus dwell richly in your heart during this very special time of year. God is still in control, and He has the last word in all

things. If you are at home, then make sure to take some time to watch some of the many YouTube videos we now have available of Father Stephanou and his TV program, ***The Logos Outreach***. Remember, that we also have his messages on **Podcast, such as Apple I Tunes, Spotify, Anchor and Google.**

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I would like to make a correction to my last article: “As it was in the days of Noah” in the previous newsletter. 1st column of Pg. 4, 25 lines down, should read “rebuild **from** its broken past sins.”