Storm Warning!
Matthew 24:36-44 (NKJV)

Please turn with me in your Bibles to our scripture text in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter twenty-four, and let's read verses 36-44.

Matthew 24:36-44 (NKJV)

36 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.
38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.

41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.
42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

PRAYER
Now that we are in the peak of the hurricane season, we who live here along the east coast start paying more attention to what’s going on in the tropics. Because the science of meteorology has advanced so much over the last 20-30 years, we now have all kinds of sophisticated satellite technology that can give us advance warning of an approaching hurricane many days in advance.

Can you imagine what it was like for people who lived in the days before all the satellite technology? Imagine what it would be like to be right in the path of a monster hurricane with very little warning it was coming.

Such was the case for the citizens of Galveston, Texas in the year 1900.

On the afternoon of **SEPTEMBER 7, 1900**, very few people in Galveston would have ever believed within 24 hours their city would be destroyed by one of the worst hurricanes in American history.

People at the newly formed **WEATHER BUREAU** were aware there was “a storm” out over the open waters of the **GULF OF MEXICO**, but they didn’t know just how deadly this storm was.

**SAILORS** who had sailed into Galveston Bay from the Gulf said they had been through their “**worst nightmare**.” Somewhere out there was a massive storm, but no one knew exactly **WHEN** or **WHERE** the storm would make landfall.

Just twenty four hours before the storm hit, **THE GALVESTON NEWSPAPER**, acting on a report from **THE WEATHER BUREAU**, printed a front page headline which read: **HURRICANE TOMORROW.**
Unfortunately, only a few people heeded the warning and left Galveston. In fact, by the next morning, **SEPTEMBER 8TH**, trains coming into Galveston were loaded with **CURIOSITY SEEKERS** who wanted to see the giant waves and storm first hand.

By mid-morning on **SEPTEMBER 8TH**, the waves in Galveston Bay were already at **20 FEET**. **ISAAC CLINE**, a weather man with **THE WEATHER BUREAU**, took a horse and buggy and rode up and down the beach warning people to leave immediately. He told them **“their lives were in MORTAL DANGER!”**

Many who were picnicking on the beach looked at Cline as though he were insane. Others laughed at him. Some were angry with him for **“trying to spoil their fun.”** Tragically more and more “curiosity seekers” kept arriving in Galveston by train throughout that day.

Before that day was through almost 6,000 people lost their lives. **IF ONLY THEY HAD HEEDED THE WARNINGS!**

Jesus said, “Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

For over 2,000 years now that warning has been issued: **JESUS IS COMING BACK!** We don’t know **THE YEAR**........**THE DAY**......or **THE HOUR**. All we know is that HE IS COMING BACK!

For those who have surrendered their lives to JESUS CHRIST, His imminent coming is NOTHING TO FEAR, but rather it is something to look forward to with GREAT ANTICIPATION and JOY!
But sadly, like the people in Galveston that tragic September day in 1900, most of the world is ignoring the warnings of Christ's coming and the coming judgment.

Jesus tells us in our text that prior to His coming, people will have the same kind of cavalier attitude that people had in the days of Noah. They will be “eating and drinking and marrying and giving in marriage” as though they haven’t got a care in the world.

I personally believe “The Storm of Jesus Coming In Judgment” upon the world is much closer than any of us realizes. And just like there are certain things to watch for prior to an approaching storm, the Lord has given us certain things to watch for prior to His coming.

First of all Jesus has warned us........

I. There Will Be A Sharp INCREASE In The PRESSURE.

1. In this 24th Chapter of Matthew, Jesus has clearly indicated that this sharp increase in pressure will be felt on two different levels:

   (A) First of all, the increase in pressure will be felt on a GLOBAL level.

   Scripture: MATTHEW 24:6-8 (NKJV)

   And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.
Jesus is telling us that “the pressure” that will be felt on a GLOBAL LEVEL will primarily come from two sources: **WAR** and **NATURAL DISASTERS**.

*There are **195 countries** in the world and currently **over 60 of those countries are involved in a war**.

There are **EIGHT countries in the world which now possess nuclear weapons**. This means for the first time in history, man has the capability to annihilate all of humanity.

In the last **63 years** America has been involved in a war or military conflict of some kind in **45 of those 63 years**.

When you count up **the billions of dollars spent** and the **hundreds of thousands of lives lost** in these wars, it is easy to see the tremendous pressure these military conflicts have put on the American tax payers. And with imminent danger looming in Syria, and North Korea and Iran, one has to wonder just how much more we can take.

* And what about the rising pressure of **NATURAL DISASTERS**? Forget “Global Warming” and “The Greenhouse Effect.” Jesus said as “the storm of His judgment” approaches, we will see an increase in things like **famines.....pestilences and earthquakes**.

Even the National Weather Service has described the **torrential rains, the superstorms, and the swarm of deadly tornadoes** as being “of Biblical proportions.”
If it seems the weather has grown more extreme in recent years it’s not just your imagination. The number of catastrophic weather-related disasters resulting in the major loss of life and property has sharply risen each decade since 1970.

Last year (2012) there were 14 weather-related disasters that cost the American tax payers over $1 billion dollars each.

Worldwide, 32.4 million people lost their homes last year in weather-related disasters.

JESUS WARNED US THIS WOULD HAPPEN!

(B) But not only will this increase in pressure be felt on a Global Level, it will also be felt on the PERSONAL level.

MATTHEW 24:12 (NKJV) And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.”

In recent weeks we have seen a lot of evidence of the kind of “lawlessness” Jesus described. Abroad, we have seen the tragic reports of the “lawless act” committed by Syrian President Assad killing more than 100,000 of his own people with chemical weapons.

Here at home we have seen the tragic reports of that innocent Australian baseball player who was killed by three “thugs” in Oklahoma who said they killed him “because they were bored.”
And what about that little toddler who had just turned one six weeks earlier, who was shot to death in his stroller by a Georgia teenager?

And even here in our own congregation we have seen a horrible act of “lawlessness” committed within the past three weeks.

There is increasing evidence that people can no longer cope with the increasing pressures of our society.

*SUICIDE now claims more lives in America than automobile accidents. According to recent statistics, 17.6 out of 100,000 people take their own lives each year.

* MILLIONS OF AMERICANS are on prescription anti-depressants, and many more are addicted to prescription pain-relievers such as OXYCONTIN, OXYCODONE, PERCOCET, and VICODIN. In fact, these drugs are in such demand, many drug dealers now sell these painkillers on the street just like heroin and crack-cocaine.

**THIS INCREASE IN PRESSURE THAT IS BEING FELT GLOBALLY AND PERSONALLY, IS A CLEAR WARNING THAT “THE STORM OF THE LORD’S JUDGMENT” IS GETTING CLOSER AND CLOSER!**
But not only did the LORD warn us there will be AN INCREASE IN THE PRESSURE, He also warned us......

II. There Will Be A Dramatic DROP In The TEMPERATURE

1. Often when a dangerous storm is approaching you'll know it by the sudden drop in temperature.

2. As the storm of the Lord’s judgment draws near, there will be a “sharp drop in the social temperature of humanity.”

The apostle Paul writes in II Timothy 3:1-5 (NKJV)

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

In these verses, Paul is warning us about the “sharp drop” in the social temperature. As the time for the LORD’S JUDGMENT draws closer, we will see a more LOVELESS GODLESS LAWLESS society, that will grow increasingly worse before Christ comes in judgment.

As man’s love for GOD, his own family, his friends and his fellow man, sharply decreases, we will see human relationships deteriorate to a level of barbarianism.
There will be a **SHARP INCREASE IN THE PRESSURE**.

There will be a **DRAMATIC DROP IN THE TEMPERATURE**.

And the third warning sign that **The Storm of The Lord's Judgment** is rapidly approaching is.....

**III. There Will Be A Subtle SHIFTING Of The WINDS**

1. Jesus tells us here in Matthew 24:4,5 (NKJV) “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My Name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.”

2. Paul tells us in II Timothy 4:3-4 (NKJV) “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but accordingly to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

3. Just think how the “winds of religious doctrine” have subtly changed over the past 25-30 years.

   -25-30 years ago, most of us had probably never even heard of the Muslim religion, and if we had, we knew very little about it. Now look at the key role the Muslim religion plays in world events.

   -25-30 years ago, most of us probably never dreamed we would see the day when Christianity would be viewed as the greatest threat to America.
Does it bother you that this generation of Americans has been labeled “the most biblically illiterate generation” in American history?

George Barna has been surveying changes in American religion for more than two decades now. In a recent survey, Barna revealed that most professing Christians no longer believe in the existence of Satan or the Holy Spirit. And 22% of those polled said they do not believe Jesus lived a “perfect, sinless life” while on earth.

CONCLUSION

As we close, let’s go back to Galveston, Texas on that fateful September day in 1900.

With that catastrophic hurricane approaching, all those people had to do was HEED THE WARNING OF ISAAC CLINE. All they had to do was forsake their worldly pleasures and treasures and get to a place of safety and they would have survived the storm. But they didn’t heed the storm warning!

We look at such tragedies and we think how “fool hardy” those people were to have believed they could “ride out the storm.” How much more “fool hardy” are those who believe they can “ride out” the coming storm of God’s judgment? Now is the time to flee to safety! Now is the time to run to Jesus Christ, your only refuge from the storm! Therefore you also BE READY for the SON OF MAN is coming at an hour you do not expect!