



INTRODUCTION  
TO THE  
END-TIMES

The Red Letters Of Matthew 24

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# THE FIRST STAGE OF THE END-TIME DRAMA: BIRTH PAINS (MATTHEW 24.1-14)

## I. INTRODUCTION

The subject of the end-times is often thought of and treated as an optional subject reserved for the 'unbalanced' and the 'fringe.' In the next few decades God is going to bring the subject of the return of His Son to the forefront of the consideration of the church. There are three primary reasons why the subject is not optional for us:

- A. It is the only generation that God has chosen to announce with prophetic signs that increase in intensity as we get closer to Jesus' return and the only generation that God requires people to discern and know. These prophetic signs include supernatural signs in the heaven, trends in society, and political, military, religious, scientific, technological, and economic developments. God calls it wisdom to understand (Rev. 13:18, 17:9); for it is an issue of life and death. And then these signs are the grounds on which God demands of us that we know the hour of His return and live accordingly.
  1. The Scripture requires those in the generation the Lord returns to know it and prepare accordingly. Jesus and Paul emphasized the know-ability of the prophetic signs of the End-Times (Mt. 24:32-34; Luke 21:25-29; 1 Thess. 5:1-6; 2 Thess. 2:1-11).
  2. Seven times in Matthew 24 Jesus used the word "know." Knowing the day and hour of His return is a requirement and a Biblical command. He said that "no one knows" not to discourage us from knowing but to require it of us.

3. God promised to give prophetic signs in the generation that the Lord returns as an expression of His mercy, so people can make the necessary preparations for what is coming. These prophetic signs serve the Church like a weather station that signals trouble before it comes so people can prepare and save lives. The example of the Southeast Asia Tsunami caused by the Sumatra earthquake on Dec. 26, 2004 illustrates this. Jesus rebuked Israel for being unable to read the prophetic signs at Jesus' first coming (Mt. 16:3). Jesus taught that Israel came under judgment for being unresponsive to God because they did not know the time of their visitation from God.

***For days will come...when your enemies will...<sup>44</sup> level you, and your children to the ground...because you did not know the time of your visitation. (Luke 19:43-44)***

- B. It is the most dramatic generation in human history with two great extremes never before witnessed; "great and terrible" (Joel 2:11b). Before Jesus returns, the nations will witness the greatest display of glory and experience the most severe pressures (God's judgments, Satan's rage, man's sin) that they have ever seen. This generation will suffer a death toll of half the earth's population.
- B. It reveals Jesus' heart and leadership. The four Gospels (totaling 89 chapters) give us a record of Jesus' heart and power at His first coming when He accomplished redemption. In a similar way, the end of the age (over 150 chapters) reveals Jesus' heart and power as He takes over the leadership of the whole earth and claims that which He purchased on Golgotha. In other words, the Gospels and the End-Time Scriptures reveal the same Jesus and the same power by the same Holy Spirit in the same Bible. The Book of Revelation is called the revelation of Jesus because it reveals His heart, power and leadership. The Book of Revelation is not an optional subject for the Church.

***<sup>1</sup> The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants--things which must shortly take place. (Rev. 1:1)***

## II. AN OVERVIEW OF MATTHEW 24

- A. Matthew 24 is the most Jesus' most lengthy, explicit and detailed teaching on the end of the age in Scripture. It is also found in Mark 13. A variation of the Olivet Discourse is found in Luke 21. It's a different teaching though because

Luke says that it took place in the Temple whereas Matthew and Mark's were recorded as being taught on the Mount of Olives.

B. An Outline of the Olivet Discourse

1. The Disciple's Question (24:1-3)
2. **Jesus' Answer part 1:** The First Stage of the End-Time Drama (24:4-14)
3. **Jesus' Answer part 2:** The Commencement and Conclusion of the Great Tribulation (24:15-31)
4. **Jesus' Answer part 3:** Parables About Preparedness (24:32-51)
  - a. The Fig Tree (24:33-35)
  - b. The Days of Noah (24:36-41)
  - c. The Thief (24:42-44)
  - d. The Faithful and Wise Servant (24:45-51)

III. THE BIG PICTURE

A. The big picture of Matthew 24 is Jesus answering the questions of inquisitive young adults who want to understand the unique dynamics of His return and of the end of the age. In verse 3 these young adults ask a question that provokes a detailed two chapter response (Matt. 24-25).

1. Jesus prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem in verses 1-2.

***Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." (24:1-2)***

2. The disciples new from the mass of OT Scriptures that the destruction of Jerusalem was synonymous with the end of the age (see Zechariah 12-14 for instance). Thus, Jesus prophecy about the destruction of the Temple prompted them to ask Him about the end of the age. The two issues are inseparably linked in the Jewish mind.

***As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" (24:3)***

- B. In this session we're going to deal with the first part of Jesus' answer to their question. There are three parts of His answer. The first part is contained in Matthew 24:4-14 where Jesus explains the beginning stages of the coming storm:

***And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. " Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:3-14)***

#### **IV. THE FIRST STAGE OF THE END-TIME DRAMA**

- A. Jesus' answer can be broken up into 3 parts:
1. Explaining the First Stage of the End-Time Drama (4-14)
  2. Explaining the Commencement and Conclusion of the Great Tribulation (15-31)
  3. Explaining what He expects of His People in the Hour that Precedes the End of the Age (32-51)
- B. The beginning stage of the coming storm is essential to understand. In the third part of the answer Jesus explains how He expects us to know the hour of His return. Those exhortations to preparedness are grounded in the reality of these precipitous events. Remember, ***Jesus is answering the question about what the signs of the end of the age will be.*** This discourse is all about signs.

- C. The beginning stage of the end of the age is called “the beginning of birth pains:”

***And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. (24:4-8)***

- D. The result of these unprecedented global events will be extreme social pressure:

***Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (24:9-14)***

- E. The beginning of birth pains is in stark contrast to the heavy labor pains of the Great Tribulation which is described in the following verses 15-22.

***"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. (Matthew 24:15-22)***

- F. If the birth pains precede the intense labor of the Great Tribulation, what are the birth pains? When did/do they begin? When will they end?

## V. WHAT ARE THE BIRTH PAINS?

Birth pains signal to the mother that labor is next and that the baby will be born shortly after. It is a timing indicator. Jesus was intentional about using this concept when teaching about the end of the age.

The birth pains are social conflicts and ecological disturbances. The beginning of birth pains is intense enough to warrant paralleling it to woman within hours of her hard labor. She is immobilized from usual life. These birth pains will create many-faceted crises unparalleled in all of human history. If they are not distinctly discernable then they are not prophetic signs. The trends mentioned in these verses have dramatically increased in the last century.

- A. The birth pains will be a season of history that precedes the Great Tribulation of intensifying pressures on a global scale.
1. Season of intensification: Matt. 24:4-8
  2. Natural disruptions: Matt. 24:4-8
  3. Nations in conflict: Matt. 24:4-8
  4. Heavenly warfare: Matt. 24:4-8
  5. Famine – food & drought: Matt. 24:4-8
  6. Pestilence – increased trouble: Matt. 24:4-8
  7. Deception: Matt. 24:4-8
  8. Antichrist begins political career incognito: Dan. 7:8; 11:23
  9. Harlot / Antichrist begin relationship: Rev. 17:3; 18:3,7,12-13; Dan. 11:24,38; Ps. 52:7
  10. Antichrist consolidates his power base / removes 3 kings: Dan. 7:8; 11:22-23; Rev. 17:13
  11. Global Houses of Prayer: Is. 56:6-7; Amos 9:11-12; Mark 11:17
  12. Daniel Seals released: Dan. 12:4, 9-10
  13. Jesus' prayer answered: Jn. 17:20-26

B. The trends mentioned in Matthew 24:4-8 are:

1. **Deception/False prophets:** At the turn of the last century we saw the greatest emergence of cults and religions in human history. False religions like Islam and Hinduism have ancient roots, but the pseudo Christian cults like Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses are recent phenomenons of which distort the true image of the person of Christ.
2. **War:** an unprecedented escalation of war has occurred in the twentieth century making it the bloodiest time in history (over 100 million people killed). Since World War II, over 150 major wars have occurred with a death toll of over 25 million. Since the Berlin Wall fell (Nov. 1989), conflicts have forced 50 million people from their homes worldwide. There were over 70 wars in 1995 (double from 1989).
3. **Ethnic conflict:** civil disorder and racism. The Greek word for nation in Mt. 24:7 is *ethnos* which translates ethnic or tribe. Nation against nation is "ethnic group against ethnic group". The ethnic wars in Cambodia, Albania, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo and Sudan along with Stalin's purges, and China's Cultural Revolution have caused the number murdered by their own people to exceed the deaths caused by wars outside their borders (totaling over 150 million deaths). The militant Islamic leaders have especially targeted Israel, the USA and the European Union.
4. **Famine:** nearly a billion people worldwide world suffer from malnutrition. Over 25,000 people die every day worldwide from hunger related causes. Nearly 5 million die of starvation every year. Water shortages have reduced the global food supply by 10 percent. The population is growing yet its agricultural capabilities are diminishing. Over 500 million people do not have enough drinking water. The numbers increase to 2 billion by 2025 (greatest famine in history).

5. ***Pestilences (disease)***: the rise of diseases such as tuberculosis, the Avian bird flu, pneumonia, meningitis, are becoming unstoppable as some are becoming more resistant to inoculations. The nations of the former Soviet Union are developing genetically engineered viruses and bacteria that cannot be stopped by antibiotics. Terrorists threaten to use smallpox because many today (even in the USA) do not have a vaccination against it. Epidemics of typhoid and diphtheria have afflicted areas of India and Russia. Deadly new strains of malaria, tuberculosis and cholera are becoming resistant to all known antibiotics and are killing millions. Diseases are growing in an unprecedented way globally especially viral killers like AIDS and Ebola. There are nearly 35 million people living with AIDS (2007). More than 25 million have died from AIDS since 1981. Africa has over 11 millions AIDS orphans. Six million people a year are getting infected.
- C. The birth pains are global events and trends that prepare the earth for the “heavy labor pains” of the final 3 ½ years of this age.
1. Scripture refers to this 3½ years in 8 different ways: ***42 months*** (Rev. 11:2; 13:5), ***1260 days*** (Rev. 11:3; 12:6), ***time, times and half a time*** (Rev. 12:14; Dan. 7:25; 12:7), ***the Great Tribulation*** (Mt. 24:21; Rev. 7:14), ***Jacob's Trouble*** (Jer. 30:7), ***a time of trouble*** (Dan. 12:1), ***the middle of the Week*** (Dan. 9:27), ***perilous times*** (2 Tim. 3:1).

## VI. WHEN DO/DID THE BIRTH PAINS BEGIN?

- A. The birth pains are clearly observable trends and events. And it would seem logical that they would have a clear point of beginning. It's my conviction that the birth pains began in 1967 when the Jews took possession of the city of Jerusalem for the first time since the generation of the apostles.
- B. I don't think we can overestimate the significance of the establishment of the nation-state in 1948 and the Jewish presence in the city of Jerusalem in 1967. In the mind of God this is a very monumental event.
- C. The reason it's such a powerful event is because all end-time prophecy hinges on the presence of Jewish people in a Jewish nation. No other generation since the

apostle Paul's generation has seen Jewish presence on Jewish soil. We cannot overstate the importance of this.

- D. While there is no Bible verse that states that the birth pains begin when the Diaspora ends, it seems clear to me that the re-possessing of Jerusalem signaled a significant change on the global landscape.
- E. There is no other probable event that could be comparable to the establishment of the nation state. No one has ever presented a proportional trigger event.
- F. My conviction is that the establishment of the state of Israel made the fulfillment of eschatological promises possible for the first time in 2,000 years. And this therefore demands that I consider the possibility that it may also trigger this final stage natural history before the time of Tribulation that immediately precedes the second coming.

## **VII. WHEN DO THE BIRTH PAINS END?**

- A. Natural birth pains intensify up until the point of "contractions" and "heavy labor pain." And these contractions and heavy labor pain are *a part of the birth pains*. So, in essence, the birth pains will continue up until the moment Jesus enters Jerusalem and closes the time of Great Tribulation.
- B. Matthew 24:4-14 makes it clear that these birth pains are only preliminary trends that set the context for the global crisis that Jesus called "the Great Tribulation" and defined in Matthew 24:15 on.
- C. The nature of birth pains is that they intensify as the birth becomes closer and closer. In the prophetic sense, the birth pains do not end until the new age is 'born.' The birth pains will *dramatically* intensify during the great tribulation; so much so that if God does not cut it short, "no flesh would survive" (Matthew 24:21-22).

## **VIII. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE SAINTS DURING THE BIRTH PAINS?**

- A. The birth pains will be nuanced in their impact on the saints. In Matthew 24:9-14 Jesus elaborates on the nature of this hour of global birth pain. He said:

***Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (24:9-14)***

- B. Jesus explains that the impact of the birth pains on the redeemed will be 10-fold:
1. Martyrdom
  2. Global reproach
  3. Apostasy from within the professing community
  4. Betrayal/Hatred from within the professing community
  5. False prophets emerging
  6. Mass delusion
  7. Increase of sin
  8. Love diminishing
  9. The need for endurance
  10. The preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom to all nations
- C. The saints will be oppressed and despised during this hour because they will be walking in such confidence. The signs will be so clear and significant that their hearts will be emboldened and fearless.
- D. The boldness of the redeemed will mature dramatically when they witness a key element of the birth pains: a season of peace will be inaugurated by a world leader known as “the little horn,” “the man of sin,” “the son of perdition,” “Gog,” “the beast” and “the antichrist.”

- E. This man will emerge onto the world scene after a period of unparalleled turmoil and bloodshed in the Middle East. He will enter peaceably and instate a treaty with many nations in the Middle East; specifically with Israel.
- F. This treaty will endure for exactly 42 months before being broken. As we'll see in the next session, the breaking of the treaty triggers the final 42 months of this age known as "the Great Tribulation."
- G. This season of peace is an integral part of the birth pains. Though the earth will appear to be at ease during these years, it's only the calm before the storm. And the calm will be a geopolitical calm as Israel will dwell safely for a time. But it will not be calm for the church. This will be the hour of proclamation unlike the earth as ever seen.
- H. Many significant events will occur during this season of global calm before the storm:
  - 1. Rise of the Antichrist: Ez. 38:8-9; Dan. 7:19-25; Hos. 11:5; 1 Thess. 5:3; Rev. 13
  - 2. Transgression Reaches Fullness: Dan. 8:23 / Gen. 15:16
  - 3. False Prophet emerges: Rev. 13:11-14
  - 4. Israel makes a "Covenant of Death" by siding with Antichrist: Dan. 9:27; Is. 28:15, 18; 57:7-10; Hos. 10:3-6; 5:13; 12:1
  - 5. The International Community Will Divide up the Land of Israel: Joel 3:1-3; Ez. 36:1-3; Ps. 83:1-12
  - 6. Third Temple will be Built: Dan. 8:11-13; 9:26-27; 11:31; Mt. 24:15
  - 7. Antichrist will be Given Great Influence in Israel: Ez. 21:25-27; Jn. 5:43; Is. 57:7-10; Hos. 5:13; 10:6; 11:5
  - 8. Antichrist will gather his massive army – starts 2,300 days till sanctuary cleansed: Dan. 8:12, 14
  - 9. The nations will declare the season of "False Peace": I Thess. 5:1-3; Rev. 17:6

10. The emergence and maturing of the Religious System Harlot Babylon: Rev. 17-18; Zech. 5:5-11
11. The Great Falling Away of Unregenerate People who profess to be Christians: 2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1
12. Israel's Apostasy Matures: Dan. 9:27; Isa. 49:7; Rev. 11:8; Ps. 81:8-13
13. Anointed Messianic Proclamation: Rev. 7; 14:1-5
14. Believers Persecuted: Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24; 11:33-35; 12:7b; Matt. 24:9; Is. 66:5
15. Antichrist's head-wound / Resurrected: Rev. 13:3
16. Great Harvest: Matt. 24:14; Lk. 21:12-15; Jn. 14:12; Acts 2:17; Rev. 7:9, 14; 14:15; Hab. 1:5, 2:2, 14; Hag. 2:6-7; Zech. 10:1; Mal. 4:5-6
17. The church maturing: Dan. 12:4; Eph. 4:13-15; 5:26-27; Rev. 19:7
18. Jewish Revival: Rev. 7; Acts 2:17
19. Gospel of the Kingdom Preached w/signs & wonders: Matt. 24:14; Acts 2:17-21; Dan. 11:32; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 19:7-8; Matt. 24:14; Jn. 14:12
20. The formation of a 10 nation coalition of nations in the Middle East: Ez. 38-39; Ps. 83; Zech. 12

# THE COMMENCEMENT AND CONCLUSION OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION (MATTHEW 24.15-31)

## I. AN OVERVIEW OF MATTHEW 24

- A. Matthew 24 is the most Jesus' most lengthy, explicit and detailed teaching on the end of the age in Scripture. It is also found in Mark 13. A variation of the Olivet Discourse is found in Luke 21. It's a different teaching though because Luke says that it took place in the Temple whereas Matthew and Mark's were recorded as being taught on the Mount of Olives.
- B. An Outline of the Olivet Discourse
  - 1. The Disciple's Question (24:1-3)
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    - b. The Days of Noah (24:36-41)
    - c. The Thief (24:42-44)
    - d. The Faithful and Wise Servant (24:45-51)
- C. In this session we're going to deal with the second part of Jesus' answer.

## II. THE BIG PICTURE

A. The big picture of Matthew 24 is Jesus answering the questions of inquisitive young adults who want to understand the unique dynamics of His return and of the end of the age. In verse 3 these young adults ask a question that provokes a detailed two chapter response (Matt. 24-25).

1. Jesus prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem in verses 1-2.

***Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." (24:1-2)***

2. The disciples new from the mass of OT Scriptures that the destruction of Jerusalem was synonymous with the end of the age (see Zechariah 12-14 for instance). Thus, Jesus prophecy about the destruction of the Temple prompted them to ask Him about the end of the age. The two issues are inseparably linked in the Jewish mind.

***As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" (24:3)***

B. The first part of Jesus' answer is contained in Matthew 24:4-14 where Jesus explains the beginning stages of the coming storm:

***And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. " Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:1-14)***

#### IV. THE TWO STAGES OF THE END-TIME DRAMA

- H. Jesus' answer can be broken up into 3 parts:
1. Explaining the First Stage of the End-Time Drama (4-14)
  2. Explaining the Commencement and Conclusion of the Great Tribulation (15-31)
  3. Explaining what He expects of His People in the Hour that Precedes the End of the Age (32-51)
- I. The beginning stage of the coming storm is essential to understand. In the third part of the answer Jesus explains how He expects us to know the hour of His return. Those exhortations to preparedness are grounded in the reality of these precipitous events. Remember, ***Jesus is answering the question about what the signs of the end of the age will be.*** This discourse is all about signs.
- J. The beginning stage of the end of the age is called "the beginning of birth pains:"
- And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. (24:4-8)***
- K. The result of these unprecedented global events will be extreme social pressure:
- Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (24:9-14)***
- L. The beginning of birth pains is in stark contrast to the heavy labor pains of the Great Tribulation which is described in the following verses 15-22. This season is the second timeframe:

***"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. (Matthew 24:15-22)***

#### **V. THE CATALYTIC EVENT THAT TRIGGERS THE GREAT TRIBULATION (24:15)**

***"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."***

Jesus shifts from explaining broad trends to giving explicit details. He begins by quoting from Daniel chapter 9 where the angel Gabriel told Daniel of God's prophetic timeline from then until the end of the age.

- C. After prophesying the precise day that Jesus entered Jerusalem to be crucified (over 5 centuries before it came to pass) Daniel prophesied of a prophetic 7-year period at the end of the age that would lead to Jesus' Coming (Dan. 9:27). This 7-year period will have two distinct time frames that are each composed of 3½ years.

***<sup>27</sup> Then he (Antichrist) shall confirm a covenant (peace treaty) with many for one week (final 7 years before Jesus' return); but in the middle of the week (after the 3½ years mark) he (Antichrist) shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering (in the Jerusalem Temple). And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate (the Antichrist's activity during the Great Tribulation)... (Dan. 9:27)***

- D. The Lord showed Daniel that the Antichrist will confirm a covenant (a sort of geo-political peace treaty that dramatically affects the Middle East) with many (Jewish individuals and Gentile nations) for “one week.” A “week’ in Hebrew understanding was a period of 7 days or 7 years (Gen 29:27-28). A week of 7 years was a common term in Daniel’s day. The vast majority of commentators agree that this “week” is a week of years (7 years).
- E. No one knows when this last prophetic 7-year period begins. However, we do know how it starts. The Antichrist makes a covenant with Israel and various Middle East nations (Dan. 9:27).
- F. The Antichrist will make a peace treaty with promises that are to last for one week (7 year period). In the middle of the week (after 3½ years), the Antichrist will betray his covenant with Israel by stopping their temple activities and replacing them with his own (Dan. 9:27b, c; see 2 Thess. 2).
- G. The Antichrist will stand in the Jerusalem Temple and will demand to be worshipped as God from there (2 Thess. 2:4; Rev 13:8–17). This is referred to as the Abomination of Desolation (Dan. 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14). It signals the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

<sup>15</sup> ***When you see the 'Abomination of Desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand)... (Mt. 24:15)***

<sup>3</sup> ***The man of sin (Antichrist)...4 exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thes. 2:3-4)***

<sup>8</sup> ***All who dwell on the earth will worship him (Antichrist)... (Rev. 13:8)***

- H. The Abomination of Desolation signals the beginning of the Great Tribulation. The abomination consists of **THE MARK** and **THE IMAGE**:
  1. The image of the Beast is one of the most significant prophetic signs in the End-Times. John emphasized this statue ten times (Rev. 13:14, 15 [three times]; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4). This will occur in the middle of the last 7-year period.

2. The Abomination of Desolation will be convincing to the masses because of demonic miracles.

***<sup>9</sup> The coming of the lawless one (Antichrist) is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception...* (2 Thes. 2:9-10)**

***<sup>24</sup> For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.* (Mt. 24:24)**

3. The image of the Beast that breathes and talks and the mark of the Beast will be two components of the Abomination of Desolation that deceives the world into worshipping the Antichrist.

***<sup>13</sup> He (False Prophet) performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven...<sup>14</sup> And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs...<sup>15</sup> He was granted power to give breath to the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should speak... <sup>16</sup> He causes all...to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, <sup>17</sup> and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark... <sup>18</sup> His number is 666. (Rev. 13:13-18)***

4. The mark of the Beast (Antichrist) is a key component of the Abomination of Desolation system. It will be a public mark on people's right hand or forehead (Rev. 13:16-17).

***<sup>16</sup> He causes all...to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, <sup>17</sup> and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark... <sup>18</sup> His number is 666. (Rev. 13:15-18)***

- I. The first 3½ years will be a time of worldwide "calm before the storm" referred to as a time of "false peace and safety." It will only be a time of peace and safety for unbelievers. This false peace will begin with the Antichrist's peace treaty (which initiates the prophetic final 7 year period). It will be fueled by a false religious system known as Harlot Babylon (Rev. 17:5). There will be great intolerance towards true Christianity with widespread martyrdom of Christians (Rev. 17:6). This will not be a time of peace and safety for believers (Mt. 24:9-14).

***<sup>2</sup> For yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction***

***comes upon them, as labor pains (Great Tribulation) upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. (1 Thess. 5:2-3)***

***<sup>9</sup> They will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. (Mt. 24:9)***

- J. There will be significant tribulation for the saints in this time yet it will precede the Great Tribulation that comes to the whole earth in the final 3½ years (Mt. 24:21).

## **VII. [UNDERSTANDING THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION]**

- A. Scripture exhorts us to understand the visions that deal with this “abomination.” The Abomination of Desolation is referred to 7 times in Scripture, 5 times by Daniel (Dan. 8:13; 9:26, 27; 11:31; 12:11) and 2 times by Jesus (Matt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14). Paul also taught about the Abomination of Desolation (2 Thess. 2:3-4).

***<sup>23</sup> Therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision... (Dan. 9:23)***

***<sup>25</sup> Know therefore and understand... (Dan. 9:25)***

- B. We are exhorted “read and understand” or to take the necessary efforts to understand.

***<sup>15</sup> The abomination of desolation...whoever reads, let him understand... (Mt. 24:15)***

- C. The Abomination of Desolation is directly referred to by name 6 times in Scripture, 4 times by Daniel (Dan. 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11) and twice by Jesus (Matt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14). The Abomination of Desolation is the scriptural name for the Antichrist’s image that is placed in the Temple. The Abomination of Desolation is described without using the name 4 more times in Scripture (Rev. 13:11-18; 14:9-11; 2 Thes. 2:3-4; Dan. 3:1-30)

- D. The Abomination of Desolation cannot occur unless Israel rebuilds the Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. For the Antichrist to stop the daily sacrifices in the Temple, the Tribulation Temple must exist. The Temple does not currently exist, but we know that it must be rebuilt (Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 11:1-2; 13:12-18; Dan. 9:26, 27; 11:31; 12:11). Even now plans to rebuild the Third Temple are being pursued aggressively in Israel. This may occur just before the beginning of the final 7-year period.
- E. The Abomination of Desolation will need to be “set up”. In other words, the whole system needs to be “set up”. This will involve setting up the statue of the Antichrist in the Jerusalem Temple and setting up a worldwide infrastructure so that all can worship the image (Rev. 14:9-11). The Abomination involves stopping the animal sacrifices to replace them with the image of the Beast. It is referred to in the singular as “the” Abomination of Desolation.

***<sup>11</sup> And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the Abomination of Desolation is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. (Dan 12:11)***

1. Jesus spoke of the statue of the Antichrist ‘standing in’ in the Temple.

***<sup>15</sup> The Abomination of Desolation...standing in the holy place... (Mt. 24:15)***

2. The Antichrist’s armies will take the statue and ‘place it there’ in the Temple.

***<sup>31</sup> They shall...place there the Abomination of Desolation. (Dan 11:31)***

- F. Daniel 8:13 gives us details to give us insight into what the Antichrist will do.

***<sup>13</sup> I heard a holy one (angel) speaking... "How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host (army of Israel) to be trampled under foot?" (Dan 8:13)***

1. The Antichrist will act in a way that concerns the daily sacrifices.
2. He will lead the nations into “the transgression” that leads to the desolation of nations.
3. Someone or a group of people will “give” the sanctuary and the host to be trampled. Does this refer to God, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, or another person or group?

4. The transgression will involve giving the sanctuary to be trampled under foot or to be degraded or defiled. The sanctuary or Temple will not be torn down, but the furniture and activities will be defiled and degraded. The Abomination involves desolating the Temple with the image of the Beast and stopping the animal sacrifices offered there.
5. The transgression will involve giving the host (army of Israel or army of the Lord) to be trampled under foot. This speaks of persecuting the host. The army of Israel will be small yet it will be anointed of the Lord at the end of the conflict (Zech. 12:5-8). The majority of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) will be killed during this conflict.

#### VIII. JERUSALEM AS THE EPICENTER OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION (24:16-20)

***“...then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.”***

- A. In these verses Jesus was speaking about 70 AD AND the Great Tribulation. This confuses scholars and forces some to argue that Jesus was speaking ONLY about 70 AD in this chapter.
- B. We know that Jesus was speaking about a global calamity at the end of the age for dozens of reasons within the chapter. But it's important to note that Jesus was speaking as a true Hebrew prophet. He was using a contemporary event (even though it wouldn't occur for another few decades) to shed light on a great eschatological event.
- C. Like Isaiah using Assyrian invasion to prefigure an end-time Antichrist invasion (ch. 10-11), like Joel using Babylon to prefigure an end-time Antichrist invasion (ch. 2-3) and like Isaiah using Babylonian siege to prefigure an end-time Antichrist siege (ch. 52), Jesus uses Roman invasion of Jerusalem as a prototype and a foreshadowing of the great siege of Jerusalem at the end of the age that virtually at the prophets spoke about.

D. One of the clearest descriptions of this end-time siege and destruction of Jerusalem is found in Zechariah 12-14. There we read that:

1. All the nations will come against Jerusalem to destroy her (12:3)
2. 2/3's of the Jewish people will die (13:8)
3. The rest of the nation will collapse and be dismantled until only half of the city of Jerusalem is left standing (14:1-3)

E. There are literally hundreds of verses that speak of the final decimation of Jerusalem that precedes her final restoration.

***“And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying, “We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach.” In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy. There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.” (Isaiah 4:1-6)***

***“Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering. There is none to guide her among all the sons she has borne; there is none to take her by the hand among all the sons she has brought up. These two things have happened to you-- who will console you?-- devastation and destruction, famine and sword; who will comfort you? Your sons have fainted; they lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net; they are full of the wrath of the LORD, the rebuke of your God. Therefore hear this, you who are afflicted, who are drunk, but not with wine: Thus says your Lord, the LORD, your God who pleads the cause of his people: “Behold, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering; the bowl of my wrath you shall drink no more; and I will put it into the hand of your tormentors, who have said***

***to you, 'Bow down, that we may pass over'; and you have made your back like the ground and like the street for them to pass over.'"* (Isaiah 51:17-23)**

***<sup>1</sup> At that time...there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was...7 He (angel)...swore...that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time (3½ years); when the power of the holy people (Israel) has been completely shattered... (Dan. 12:1, 7)***

***<sup>5</sup> We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear... 6 I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? 7 Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. (Jer. 30:5-7)***

M. The city of Jerusalem will soon become the center of world controversy:

***"For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the controversy of Zion." (Isaiah 34:8 KJV)***

#### **IX. THE UNPRECEDENTED NATURE OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION (24:21-22)**

***"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short." (Matthew 24:21-22)***

A. The Great Tribulation will be the most difficult time in history for Israel, the Church, and all nations (Mt. 24:21; Jer. 30:7; Ezek. 5:9; Rev. 7:14). It will be the final 3½ year period of this age, when the Antichrist rules a worldwide system including government, finances and religion.

***<sup>1</sup> At that time...there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was...7 He (angel)...swore...that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time (3½ years); when the power of the holy people (Israel) has been completely shattered... (Dan. 12:1, 7)***

***<sup>21</sup> Then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved (physically preserved); for the elect's sakes those days will be shortened. (Mt. 24:21-22)***

<sup>23</sup> ***For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people...<sup>25</sup>There will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring... (Lk. 21:23-25)***

1. There will be tribulation against the saints from the Antichrist because they refuse to worship him (Rev. 12:12; 13:4, 8). The nations of the earth will suffer military invasions by the Antichrist's worldwide evil empire (Rev. 13).
  2. There will be tribulation against the Antichrist's worldwide empire from God who releases the judgments recorded in the Book of Revelation (7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls).
- B. Scripture refers to this 3½ years in 8 different ways: ***42 months*** (Rev. 11:2; 13:5), ***1260 days*** (Rev. 11:3; 12:6), ***time, times and half a time*** (Rev. 12:14; Dan. 7:25; 12:7), ***the Great Tribulation*** (Mt. 24:21; Rev. 7:14), ***Jacob's Trouble*** (Jer. 30:7), ***a time of trouble*** (Dan. 12:1), ***the middle of the Week*** (Dan. 9:27), ***perilous times*** (2 Tim. 3:1).
- C. John wrote of the Great Tribulation.
- <sup>13</sup> ***Who are these...and where did they come from?" 14 So he (angel) said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the Great Tribulation, and washed their robes..." (Rev. 7:13-14)***
- D. Jeremiah prophesied of the Tribulation as labor pains before the birth of the Millennial Kingdom.
- <sup>5</sup> ***We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear... 6 I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? 7 Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. (Jer. 30:5-7)***
- E. Ezekiel prophesied of events having a dual fulfillment (greatest fulfillment in the Tribulation).
- <sup>9</sup> ***I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations. (Ezek. 5:9)***

F. Joel prophesied of events having a dual fulfillment (greatest fulfillment in the Tribulation).

***<sup>2</sup> A day of darkness and gloominess...a people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations (until the end of Jesus' Millennial reign; Rev. 20:7-9). (Joel 2:2)***

G. Moses wrote of the Great Tribulation.

***<sup>27</sup> The LORD will scatter you among the peoples...<sup>29</sup> From there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him...<sup>30</sup> When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD <sup>31</sup>...He will not...forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them. (Deut. 4:27-31)***

H. The Great Tribulation is a nuanced timeframe:

1. Abomination of Desolation / Jacob's Trouble: Jer. 30:5-7; Dan. 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:3-4
2. Satan gives Antichrist Unprecedented Authority: Rev. 13:1-2
3. Jews in Prison Camps: Isa. 42:7,22; Ez. 6:8-9; 22:15; Joel 3:1-3; Is. 42:22; 50:1-2
4. Talking Statue: Rev. 13:15
5. Mark of the Beast: Rev. 13:16-18; 14:9-11
6. Global Economic Crisis & Famine: Rev. 6:5-6; 11:6
7. Babylon's Economic System Destroyed: Rev. 18; Jer.51; Isa. 13;14:4,47; 47:9,11,14
8. Antichrist Worship Movement: Rev. 13:4, 8, 12
9. Believer's Intensely Persecuted / Purified: Dan. 11:33-35; 12:7,10; Rev. 13:7; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 19:7-8; Matt. 24:14; Jn. 14:12
10. Antichrist's Army Subdues Nations: Rev. 6:1-2; Dan. 7:7; 8:24; 11:40-44; Hab. 2:4-5; Joel 2:2-11
11. 14 Numbered Judgments: Rev. 6-11

12. 2/3 of Jews in Israel Perish: Zech. 13:8-9
  13. Earths Population Greatly Reduced: Isa. 13:12; 24:6; Jer. 25:33; Rev. 6:8; 9:18
  14. Two Witnesses: Rev. 11
  15. Pockets of Mercy / Geographic: Joel 3:16b; Ps. 91; Pro. 18:10; 29:25; Ps. 20:1; 27:5; 31:20; 32:7; 37:39-40; 46:1; 50:15; 138:7
  16. Church Removed / 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet: 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Rev. 10:7; 11:15; 1 Thess. 4:16
  17. Saints Receive Resurrected Bodies: 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:16
- I. The Great Tribulation is comprised of 21 judgment events called the “seals,” “trumpets” and “bowls.”

#### **X. THE CONCLUSION OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION (24:23-31)**

***“Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Matthew 24:23-31)***

- A. AN OUTLINE OF MATTHEW 24:23-31
1. ***Widespread Deception v. 23-28***
  2. ***Events after the Great Tribulations v. 29a***
  3. ***Major Cosmic and Seismic Disturbances v. 29b***
  4. ***Visible Coming of Christ in Power and Glory v. 30***

5. ***Deployment of angels v. 31a***

6. ***Gathering of His elects from the farthest earth and heaven. v. 31b***

B. ***After those days, after that tribulation.....***

1. ***“After that Tribulation”*** – which can be expounded as affliction, anguish, distress, persecution, tribulation, trouble. The word “after” is translated from the Greek word “*meta*” which also means afterward, henceforth etc. That tribulation in Mark 13:24 referred to a specific period of redemptive history between beginning of sorrows and the second coming of Christ although tribulation occurs throughout redemptive history. The account in Matt. 24:29, has stronger language e.g. “immediately after the tribulation,...” that reinforces this chronological sequence. From Daniel 9:29 and Mark 13:14-20, this period covers the second half of a seven years covenant. Based on Mark 13:20 and Matthew 24:21-22, “unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved” point to the fact the tribulation affected all flesh on a global scale. Based on Rev. 7:14, “***...these are the ones who come out of the great tribulation,...***” referring to a great multitude from all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues before the throne of God thus we can confirm that the great tribulation affected all nations.

C. ***...the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in heaven will be shaken.....***

1. ***“Sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light”*** – In Joel 2:31 and 3:14-15, this cosmic darkness preceded the awesome the Day of the Lord. In the book of Revelation, there were multiple judgments that involved in the sun and the moon e.g. the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12), the fourth trumpet (Rev. 8:12), the fifth trumpet (Rev. 9:2) and darkness over the kingdom of the beast during the fifth bowl (Rev. 16:10). In conclusion, the prophecy of Joel and Jesus has a more general description of this phenomenon than details revealed in the Apocalyptic writing of the Apostle John. The Scripture is consistent of the fact, the cosmic and seismic disturbances that will occur ***during*** and ***after*** the tribulation are chronologically positioned ***before*** the second coming of Christ.

2. ***"Stars of heaven will fall"*** – The concept and scenario of star falling from heaven were found in the prophecy in Daniel 8:10 and Rev. 12:4., the opening of the sixth seal (Rev. 6:13), the third and the fourth trumpets (Rev. 8:10-12) and the fifth trumpet (Rev. 9:1).
3. ***"The powers in heaven will be shaken"*** – It is apparent that in these series of cosmic shaking and disturbances, the sixth seal, the fourth and the fifth trumpet (part of the opening of the seventh seal) affected the sun, the moon and the stars. This shaking is unto the purpose of manifesting the glory of the kingdom of God that cannot be shaken (Heb 12:26-27).

***"Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." 27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.***

**D. *Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.***

1. Other relevant passages to study the coming of Christ where the word *parousia* (coming) is used are Matt. 24:27, 37, 39, 1 Cor. 15:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 2 The. 2:8, 2 Pet. 3:12.
2. **Parousia** (transliterated as parousia) can be best explained as *presence, advent, coming of a human being or the Messiah*. It is often used in the context the appearance and subsequent presence of a royalty.
3. The second appearance (epiphany) of the Lord occurs at the sounding of the last trumpet (1 The. 4:17). The second coming of Christ involves more than just the appearing of the Lord from heaven. The parousia on the day of the Lord covers a series of events such as the resurrection of the dead, the transformation of the living saints, the rapture of the saints, the final defeat of the Antichrist and his false prophets, the judgments on the nations, the descending of Jesus Christ on the earth with his angels and saints and His final triumph entry into Jerusalem.

4. This is a visible event not any secret appearing. Christ is coming as lightning that flashes from the east to the west in great power and glory.

E. ***And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.***

1. This refers to an end-time event commonly known as the rapture of the saints. The Rapture describes what happens to all the *saints* worldwide related to Jesus' Second Coming. As Jesus descends from heaven, He will catch up or rapture the saints to meet Jesus in the air as they are instantly changed by receiving resurrected bodies.
2. The word Rapture comes from a Latin word *raptus*, "snatching away" (the Greek word is *harpazo*). It originated from the Latin Vulgate, which was popular in the medieval church. The word *raptus* was a Latin translation from the Greek word "harpazo" which was found in the Greek New Testament.
3. Jesus will come with His angels to rapture *all the saints* on earth when He brings all the saints with Him from heaven (Zech. 14:5; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:17; 5:10; 2 Thess. 2:1; Matt. 13:41; 24:31; 25:31; Mark 8:38; 13:27; Luke 9:26; 2 Thess. 1:7-10).

## XI. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MATTHEW 24:29-31 IN BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY

### A. Clear chronological sequencing of four major Eschatological Events

A study of these verses (29-31) within the context of the Olivet Discourse yielded a clear chronological sequencing of some major Eschatological events: (1) ***The Great Tribulation***, (2) ***Cosmic Disturbances***, (3) ***The Second Coming*** and (4) ***The Rapture***. This exegetical study focuses only on three verses thus it is inadequate in itself to establish the entire view of Eschatology. However, it is sufficient to establish the biblical foundation the following chronological sequence:

1. The second coming of Christ comes after a period of cosmic and seismic disturbances. This is consistent with the account in Rev. 6-11, concentrating on events that were released due to the opening of the sixth and seventh seals.

2. The cosmic and seismic disturbances and shaking comes both **during** and **after** the great tribulation period.
3. Thus the evidence of the Scripture in Matthew 24 reveals that the second coming of Christ must be placed **after** the occurrence of the great tribulation. The rapture of the saints will happen **after** the appearance of Christ.
4. This study provides a clear biblical case that challenges the validity of the pre-tribulation rapture.<sup>1</sup> None of the disciples would have walked away from this discourse with the impression that they would be absent from the earth during this extraordinary timeframe.

**B. It Provides Foundational Interpretative Keys to Approach Revelation chapter 6-11**

1. Proper understanding of Jesus' teaching in the Olivet Discourse allows student of the Scripture find keys to unlock chapters 9-11 in the book of Revelation. The events prophesied in the Olivet discourse are contained within the opening of the seven seals on the scroll. The final seal releases the seven trumpets judgment and the final trumpet that initiates the parousia.

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<sup>1</sup> Pre-tribulation rapture of the saints within Premillennialism is probably the most popular Eschatological view among evangelical and charismatic believers in our current time. BUT, prior to 1830, this view was not known to be held by the church. It began with a private revelation received by a young Scottish woman, Margaret Macdonald. J.N.Darby (1800-1882), also known by many as the father of modern Dispensationalism later visited her and adopted her teaching. It was later made popular through C.I. Scofield through the publication of the Scofield Reference Bible in 1909. Since this Eschatological scheme was included in the Scofield notes within the Bible, many pastors and teachers considered it a sound theological teaching when in fact it is completely invalid.

# FOUR PARABLES OF PREPAREDNESS

## (MATTHEW 24.32-51)

### I. AN OVERVIEW OF MATTHEW 24

- A. Matthew 24 is the most Jesus' most lengthy, explicit and detailed teaching on the end of the age in Scripture. It is also found in Mark 13. A variation of the Olivet Discourse is found in Luke 21. It's a different teaching though because Luke says that it took place in the Temple whereas Matthew and Mark's were recorded as being taught on the Mount of Olives.
- B. An Outline of the Olivet Discourse
  - 1. The Disciple's Question (24:1-3)
  - 2. **Jesus' Answer part 1:** The First Stage of the End-Time Drama (24:4-14)
  - 3. **Jesus' Answer part 2:** The Commencement and Conclusion of the Great Tribulation (24:15-31)
  - 4. **Jesus' Answer part 3:** Parables About Preparedness (24:32-51)
    - a. The Fig Tree (24:33-35)
    - b. The Days of Noah (24:36-41)
    - c. The Thief (24:42-44)
    - d. The Faithful and Wise Servant (24:45-51)
- C. In this session we're going to deal with the third part of Jesus' answer.

### II. THE MOST COMMON MISCONCEPTION CONCERNING THE END-TIMES

- A. The most common objection to studying the end of the age or the return of Christ is that "Jesus Himself said that no one knows the day or the hour of His return."

- B. The most common misconception concerning the end-times is that we cannot know the generation that the Lord will return in. This is a radically unfaithful use of this text in Matthew 24:36.
- C. So, in this session we're going to look at four parables that Jesus told on the heels of His teaching on:
1. The preliminary judgments called "the birth pains"
  2. The specific timing indicator of the "abomination of desolation"
  3. The commencement, nature and duration of the "Great Tribulation"
  4. The conclusion of the Great Tribulation at His second "coming"
- D. After explaining the preliminary signs, and the catalytic signs, and the cosmic signs and the consummation signs, Jesus drops four parables. These parables need to be thoroughly considered in a spirit of humility and openness. Most people only know verse 36 without understanding the immediate or larger context.
- E. The immediate context is 4 parables about why we are required to know the hour of His return – by way of the parable of the fig tree and the days of Noah. And the larger context is Jesus' explicit and detailed teaching on the specific signs and timing indicators that signal to that generation that they will see Him split the skies.
- F. So the question is: In these parables, was Jesus attempting to discourage us from knowing the hour of His return or was He attempting to encourage us to know it?
- G. The text is clear that He was encouraging and even requiring us to know. That's why the word "know" is used 7 times in these verses. We need to understand the verse "no one knows" in context to the other 6 that say "you must know" (in effect).

### III. PARABLE #1 – THE FIG TREE (GLOBAL DISCERNMENT IN THE END-TIMES)

***"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." (Matthew 24:32-35)***

A. **From the Fig Tree Learn Its Lesson**

1. In light of the sure signs that have just been explained, Jesus' first words are: learn a lesson. Learning is involved here.
2. Jesus is exhorting us to be diligent and deliberate about rightly understanding what He's been talking about up this point.
3. Here Jesus is explaining His philosophy behind sovereign signs.

B. **As Soon As Its Branches Become Tender and Put Forth Leaves, You Know that Summer is Near**

1. This is the substance of the parable. A fig tree in bloom indicates what season it is. These signs indicate what season the planet will be in.
2. Summer is a SEASON and a fig tree is a TIMING INDICATOR
3. The use of the word "know" is critical to understand. It communicates the heart of what's going on here. Jesus is encouraging and requiring the disciples to judge these signs the same way that they would judge a fig tree in bloom.
4. The only reasonable thing to do when observing a tree giving fruit that does not usually put forth fruit is to conclude that the season has changed.

*<sup>1</sup> The Pharisees...came testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven...<sup>2</sup> Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. <sup>4</sup> A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign... (Mt. 16:1-4)*

C. **So Also, When You See All These Things, You Know That He is Near, At the Gates**

1. Jesus was making an intentional connection between natural timing indicators and prophetic timing indicators; "so also..."
2. The "all these things" that Jesus is talking about is the birth pains (24:4-8), the social pressures (24:9-14) and the abomination of desolation (24:15-22).

3. The word “near” is important to grasp. The word points to the idea that Jesus wants us to know the season of His return.
4. This parable points us to *consider the season of His return*. Before the abomination of desolation is set up we won’t know the day of His return. But the birth pains will signal to us the season.

**D. This Generation Will Not Pass Away Until All These Things Take Place**

1. This verse has frustrated commentators and Bible scholars for centuries. But it’s not difficult to understand.
2. Many feel that Jesus is addressing the disciple’s generation. But He cannot be. Jesus is speaking explicitly about the generation that witnesses the signs that He has just been explaining in such detail.
3. The generation that will not pass away is the generation that witnesses the birth pains, the social pressures and the abomination of desolation. The generation that witnesses that will witness also the coming of the Lord and the end of the age; in keeping with their initial question.
4. The idea that Jesus was teaching that the age would end in 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem (Preterism) is completely unwarranted. The text CLEARLY points to an eschatological consummation that will impact the whole earth.

**E. Heaven and Earth Will Pass Away But My Words Will Not Pass Away**

1. Jesus taught the disciples that this prophecy is greater and more solid than the foundation of heaven and earth.
2. The subject of the return of the Lord is not a lesser matter than other matters found in Scripture. Jesus’ is serious about this sermon and so must we be.

**IV. PARABLE #2 – THE DAYS OF NOAH (PROPHETIC MINISTRY IN THE END-TIMES)**

***"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two***

***women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.” (Matthew 24:36-41)***

**A. That Day and Hour No One Knows**

1. Having commanded them to discern the timing indicators and to know the season of His return and the end of the age He know says that no one knows the day and the hour of His return. The season yes, but the day and hour no.
2. Jesus will come exactly 1260 days after the abomination of desolation is set up (at the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet). So in a sense we WILL know the day. The problem though is that mystery will exist because the earth will have been thrown off its axis (Is. 24), the luminaries will have been dimmed (Zech. 14; Joel 2; etc) and thus time telling devices will be rendered useless.
3. He WILL come for us 1260 days after the abomination of desolation is set up. But it will be difficult to determine when that day will be as the earth will be swallowed up in horrendous darkness.
4. The primary purpose of this statement is to encourage the hearts of the saints to understand what God is doing. It is to encourage us to be deliberate and diligent about pursuing understanding of the end-time events.
5. We must remember that this statement is couched between 6 other uses of the word “know” in the chapter; all of which point to the knowability of the final generation by virtue of the clear prophetic signs.

**B. As were the Days of Noah, So Will be the Coming of the Son of Man**

1. Jesus is drawing a historical parallel between Noah’s generation and the final generation. The trends and events observable in Noah’s generation will also be observable in the final generation. These trends are essential to understand.
2. **Widespread violence:** Noah’s generation was marked by unprecedented violence and bloodshed. The final generation will also be marked by this sort of incredible violence.

<sup>12</sup> *God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. 13 God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them... (Gen. 6:12-13)*

<sup>12</sup> *Because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. (Mt. 24:12)*

<sup>23</sup> *In the latter time...when the transgressors have reached their fullness... (Dan. 8:23)*

<sup>21</sup> *They did not repent of their murders...sorceries...sexual immorality or thefts. (Rev. 9:21)*

- a. **Murder**: as the primary sin on earth (Rev. 6:9-11; 7:13-14; 9:21; 13:7, 10; 16:6; 17:6)
- b. **Sorceries**: occult and demon worship will fill the earth (Rev. 13:3-4, 8, 12-15; 14:11)
- c. **Immorality**: demon-energized perversion (Rev. 9:20-21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:3; 19:2)
- d. **Theft**: legislation and persecution motivated by theft (like the Nazi's anti-Semitism)

3. **The prayer movement**: In the final verse in Genesis 4 we read that men began to call upon the name of the Lord. This was the emergence of a prayer movement that prepared an environment for God to release the prophetic word to men like Noah and Enoch. This prayer movement was rooted in the longing for the coming of the Messiah (as God promised to send in Gen. 3:15). The final generation will witness the same phenomenon. We will see the emergence of a global prayer movement that will prepare the way for the manifestation of the word of the Lord.
4. **The prophetic movement**: Out of that prayer movement came prophets and seers. And out of the end-time prayer movement will come prophets and seers.

*It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 1:14-15)*

*...if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly... (2 Peter 2:5)*

*By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (Hebrews 11:7)*

*"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. (Joel 2:28-29)*

*Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. And I was told, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings." (Revelation 10:8-11)*

5. **Signs of the times:** Noah was warned by God and was told the exact day that God was going to flood the earth. Enoch, Noah and other no doubt preached and warned the earth for what was to come. Noah's generation was held accountable by the signs given to them and by Noah's prophetic ministry. Jesus is drawing a comparison with this generation for us so that we understand how we're to understand the signs of the times at the end

of the age. They hold us accountable and all men will be judged on account of them because they will all have heard enough to know.

6. **The requirement to know the hour of judgment:** Noah and his generation were commanded by God to respond to God accordingly. They were commanded to know that they were living in an hour of judgment. And the final generation is commanded to know that they are living in final generation. The interesting thing is, only the final generation can know that they are living in the final generation. Only they see the signs that demand our response.
7. **The way of escape:** In Noah's generation the way of escape was believing that God had a controversy with the planet and that judgment was just around the corner. Then, having agreed upon what God was revealing through His prophets, they people were given the ark for safety. The only way of escape was that Ark. The way of escape for the final generation is being a faithful witness even unto death. We don't become victorious by dodging death. We become victorious by loving and obeying Jesus to the end.

<sup>7</sup> ***The mystery of lawlessness is already at work...9 The coming of the lawless one (Antichrist) is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception...because they did not receive the love of the truth... (2 Thess. 2:7-10)***

***And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. (Revelation 12:11)***

<sup>7</sup> ***I (Jesus) am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book ...9 I (angel) am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book...10 He said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book...16 I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things..." 17 The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!"...18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these***

***things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life...20 Even so, come, Lord Jesus! (Rev. 22:6-20)***

**C. In the Days Before the Flood**

1. The days that preceded the flood were marked by violence, carelessness and a forceful prophetic ministry. The text says that they were “eating drinking and giving in marriage.” In other words, everything was normal and everything was usual.
2. The nations at the end of the age will be like Noah’s generation in that they will interpret the calm before the storm as enduring peace and not as a brief window of mercy.
3. When the nations feel that they are peaceful and safe the prophetic ministry challenges it by warning of what is to come.

**D. They Were Unaware Until the Flood Came**

1. This verse is so interesting. Having been warned and prepared, Noah’s generation was still unaware.
2. The point is this: People don’t know the day or the hour not because they can’t know but because they do not want to know. Knowing changes everything. And that is Jesus’ point.
3. They lived their lives as they always had. Noah’s message caused them to harden their hearts against the word of the Lord and to embrace a lifestyle of stupidity in the most devastating judgment in human history.
4. At the end of the age, the people who are caught off guard when the sky splits will be because they chose to resist the message of the return of Jesus and the signs that confirmed that message. People won’t be unaware because God wants them to be or because they are supposed to be. Ignorance is a decision that people make when confronted with a message.

5. The two witnesses on the Temple Mount (Rev. 11), the angels proclaiming the Gospel in mid-air (Rev. 14) and the worldwide prophetic movement (Joel 2) along with signs in heaven and on earth will leave all of humanity without excuse.

#### E. **One Taken and One Left**

1. This verse is often used to support a pre-tribulation rapture. The problem is, this is in context to ***the flood of Noah not the rapture***. In other words, getting taken is a bad thing not a good thing. The end-time crisis will come like a flood and will take people away.
2. This is NOT the rapture. The context is judgment.
3. The rapture occurs at the 7<sup>TH</sup> TRUMPET, AFTER THE TRIBULATION. (1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; Matt. 24:29-31; 2 Thess. 2:1-3; Rev. 10:7)

#### V. **PARABLE #3 – THE THIEF (THE SUDDENESS OF THE END-TIMES)**

***“Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” (Matthew 24:42-44)***

#### A. **Therefore Stay Awake**

1. This phrase is intended to quicken diligence in our spirit to watch and pray. In Mark 13, after the disciples ask Jesus what they must do in light of the end time drama, Jesus simply says “watch and pray.”
2. In the Garden shortly after this (Matthew 26) Jesus will ask the disciples to stay awake with Him to pray “lest they enter into temptation.”
3. The end-times will bring such deception and seduction that if we are not intentional and deliberate about guarding our hearts we will falter in the face of the coming storm. Even John the apostle was tempted and seduced when seeing the Harlot Babylon in Revelation 17-18.
4. Staying awake means not being lulled to sleep!

***"But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:34-36)***

**B. You Do Not Know What Day Your Lord is Returning**

1. This doesn't mean that no one can know or that no one will know. Nor does it mean that no one should know. It means that at that point in time no one knew because that generation was the generation ordained to witness the coming of the Lord and the end of the age.
2. The greater context of the parable obviously beckons us to know the hour that the Lord is coming.

**C. If the Master of the House Had Known What Part of the Night the Thief Was Coming**

1. If someone told you that someone had planned on breaking into your house to steal your belongings at 2:30 a.m. how many of us would sleep well? Jesus is saying that can know the hour of His return by watching the signs. And the signs will tell us when the sudden and dramatic return will come.
2. Jesus' coming like a thief is only for those who do not know He is coming. For those who know and who are waiting He is a Bridegroom. We will not see Jesus as a thief but as a Husband.

***Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of***

*faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. (1 Thessalonians 5:1-10)*

**D. You Also Be Ready, For the Son of Man is Coming at an Hour that You Do Not Expect**

1. The call to preparedness is in context to the signs. And the hour that we do not expect is also in context to the signs. Meaning: We will not expect it – until we see the signs.
2. The broad trends of the birth pains will alert us that things are changing, the intense social pressures during that time will confirm it to us, and the abomination of desolation will assure us that He is coming in 1260 days.

**VI. PARABLE #4 – THE FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT (LEADERSHIP IN THE END-TIMES)**

*"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 24:45-51)*

**A. Who is the Faithful and Wise Servant?**

1. Jesus now turns and addresses the issue of authority, leadership and delegated stewardship.
2. The question here is over the quality of leadership that is over the people of God in a transitional season of history when their Master is absent from them.

**B. His Master Has Set Him Over His Household to Give Them Food in Due Season**

1. The Master is God and the Servant is the leader who is given leadership and authority over the people of God.
2. The responsibility of the Servant is to give “food” in due season to the people in the Master’s house.
3. Food is sustenance. Food is what we need to survive. Nourishing the people of God at the end of the age is feeding them the right “food” that is appropriate for the season.
4. The responsibility of those in leadership during the generation that witnesses the birth pains and the catalytic abomination are REQUIRED by God to prepare the people for that hour.

**C. Blessed is the Servant Whom the Master Finds So Doing When He Comes**

1. This is a beatitude. The Lord expects His leaders to feed the people with knowledge and understanding in the hour of His return.
2. Leaders in the body of Christ will be evaluated by how well they prepare the people of God for the end of the age. The signs call them into account.

**D. The Wicked Servant says, “My Master is Delayed” and Beats His Fellow Servants and Eats and Drinks with the Drunkards**

1. Leaders in the body of Christ who do not care for the people are regarded as wicked.
2. The inner conviction of a wicked leader is that Jesus is not coming. Peter called this the spirit of “mockery;” mocking the idea of Jesus’ return.

***This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, “Where is the promise***

*of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:1-9)*

3. The Servant who has this conviction and who does not feed the other Servants under him is guilty of abusing them.
4. One of the primary prophetic themes in regards to the end-times in the prolific amount of false teachers and false prophets. Wolves ravaging the flock will be so prevalent in the last days. That's why all the apostles warned us of it almost every time they mentioned the second coming. (see 1 and 2 Timothy; 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 John, 2 Peter, Jude and the book of Revelation)

**E. The Master will Come on a Day When He Does Not Expect and Will Cut Him Into Pieces and Put Him with the Hypocrites**

1. This is clearly no small matter. Jesus will personally deal with leaders who do not care for the people that God has entrusted to them.
2. And that dealing will be severe. Being cut into pieces and put with the hypocrites is eternal punishment.

**F. In that Place there will be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth**

1. If there was any question as to whether or not this is eternal punishment or just temporal rebuke, this statement settles it.

2. Regenerate believers will not end up here. Scripture is adamant, clear and firm about the idea that the indwelling Spirit cannot be annulled and the new birth destroyed. He who God regenerates and saves is also lead and kept by Him.
3. The assumption that the new birth can be easily annulled comes from a low and unbiblical understanding of the new birth. Those who affirm the destruction of the new man see the new man as a temporal thing that can be annulled and reinstated by the act of the will. Scripture is clear that the regeneration of a sinner is FAR more efficacious than anything we could ever imagine.
4. The warning is very real because of the abundance of unregenerate leaders in the Body of Christ not because of there is a possibility of having the new birth annulled. In context to these wicked leaders Jude assured us that God keeps those who He has “caused to be born again” (1 Peter 1:1-5):

***But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 1:17-25)***

5. Paul taught that a “great falling away” will accompany the emergence of the Antichrist. And immediately afterwards he taught that the saints who were born again would not be eligible of that coming delusion:

***Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion/great falling away comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-17)***

# PARALLEL TEACHING ON THE SECOND COMING IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

<p><b>Matthew 24:1-42</b> <b>Jesus foretells destruction of Temple (vv. 1-2)</b></p> <p>" 1 Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. 2 And He said to them, <u>"Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."</u></p> <p><b>Signs of the End</b></p> <p>3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, <u>"Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"</u> 4 And Jesus answered and said to them, <u>"See to it that no one misleads you. 5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. 6 "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those</u></p>	<p><b>Mark 13:1-31</b> <b>Jesus foretells destruction of Temple (vv. 1-2)</b></p> <p>" 1 As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" 2 And Jesus said to him, <u>"Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down."</u></p> <p><b>Signs of the End</b></p> <p>3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately, 4 "Tell us, <u>when will these things be, and what will be the sign</u> when all these things are going to be fulfilled?" 5 And Jesus began to say to them, <u>"See to it that no one misleads you. 6 "Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He!' and will mislead many. 7 "When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do</u></p>	<p><b>Luke 21:5-33</b> <b>Jesus foretells destruction of Temple (vv. 1-2)</b></p> <p>" 5 And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said, 6 <u>"As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down."</u></p> <p><b>Signs of the End</b></p> <p>7 They questioned Him, saying, <u>"Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the sign</u> when these things are about to take place?" 8 And He said, <u>"See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is near.'</u> Do not go after them. 9 <u>"When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow</u></p>
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*things* must take place, but *that* is not yet the end. 7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes." 8 "But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs.

### Persecution

9 "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name." 10 "At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another." 11 "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many." 12 "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold." 13 "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved." 14 "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

### Abomination of Desolation

15 "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. 17 "Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the

not be frightened; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end. 8 "For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs.

### Persecution

9 "But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them." 10 "The gospel must first be preached to all the nations. 11 "When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Holy Spirit. 12 "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death." 13 "You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

### Abomination of Desolation

14 "But when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION standing where it should not be (let the reader

immediately." 10 Then He continued by saying to them, "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, 11 and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven." 12 "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake." 13 "It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.

### Persecution

14 "So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; 15 for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute. 16 "But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put *some* of you to death, 17 and you will be hated by all because of My name. 18 "Yet not a hair of your head will perish." 19 "By your endurance you will gain your lives." 20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation

things out that are in his house. 18 "Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. 19 "But **woe** to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 "But **pray** that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.

### Great Tribulation

21 "For **then** there will be a **great tribulation**, such as has not occurred **since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.** 22 "**Unless** those days had been cut short, **no life would have been saved;** but **for the sake of the elect** those days will be **cut short.** 23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There *He is*,' **do not believe *him*.** 24 "For **false Christs** and **false prophets** will arise and will show **great signs** and **wonders**, so as to **mislead**, if possible, even the **elect.**

25 "Behold, I have told you in advance. " 26 "So if **they** say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, *or*, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe *them*. 27 "For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures

understand), then those who are in Judea **must flee to the mountains.** 15 "The one who is on the housetop **must not go down**, or go in to get anything out of his house; 16 and the one who is in the field **must not turn back** to get his coat. 17 "But **woe** to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 18 "But **pray** that it may not happen in the winter.

### Great Tribulation

19 "For those days will be a **time of tribulation** such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and **never will.** 20 "**Unless** the Lord had shortened *those days*, no life would have been saved; but **for the sake of the elect**, whom He chose, **He shortened the days.** 21 "And then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ'; or, 'Behold, *He is* there'; **do not believe *him*;**

22 for **false Christs** and **false prophets** will arise, and will show **signs** and **wonders**, in order **to lead astray**, if possible, **the elect.** 23 "But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance."

### Second Coming of Jesus

" 24 "But in those days, **after**

**is near.** 21 "Then **those who are in Judea **must flee to the mountains**, and **those who are in the midst of the city **must leave**, and **those who are in the country must not enter the city;** 22 because **these are days of vengeance**, so that **all things which are written will be fulfilled.******

### Great Tribulation

23 "**Woe** to those who are **pregnant** and to those who are **nursing babies** in those days; for **there will be great distress** upon the land and **wrath to this people;** 24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led **captive into all the nations;** and **Jerusalem** will be **trampled** under foot by the **Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."**

### Second Coming of Jesus

" 25 "There will be **signs in sun** and **moon** and **stars**, and on the earth **dismay among nations**, in **perplexity** at the **roaring of the**

**sea** and the **waves**, 26 **MEN FAINTING from fear** and **the expectation** of the things which are **coming upon the world;** for **the powers of the heavens** will be **shaken.** 27 "Then they will see **THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory.** 28

will gather.

### Second Coming of Jesus

29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. 31 "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

### Parable of the Fig Tree

32 "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; 33 so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.

### That Generation

34 "Truly I say to you, this

that tribulation, THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, 25 AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. 26 "Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory. 27 "And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.

### Parable of the Fig Tree

28 "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 "Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door.

### That Generation

30 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 31 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. "

"But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

### Parable of the Fig Tree

29 Then He told them a parable: "Behold the fig tree and all the trees; 30 as soon as they put forth *leaves*, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near. 31 "So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.

### That Generation

32 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place. 33 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. "

### Watchfulness

" 34 "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; 35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. 36 "But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and

generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

#### Watchfulness

" 36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

#### As in the Days of Noah

37 "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. 38 "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. 41 "Two women *will be* grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left. 42 "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."

" 13 "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour." (Matthew 25:13 NASB95)

#### Watchfulness

" 32 "But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. 33 "Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come. 34 "*It is* like a man away on a journey, *who* upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, *assigning* to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. 35 "Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— 36 in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. 37 "What I say to you I say to all, 'Be on the alert!'

to stand before the Son of Man." "

#### As in the Days of Noah (17:26-35)

" 26 "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. 31 "On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. 32 "Remember Lot's wife. 33 "Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses *his life* will preserve it. 34 "I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. 35 "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left."

