

Title: The Great Tribulation

Text: Matthew 24:15 - 31

Take your Bibles, please, and turn to Matthew chapter 24, as we continue our study of Prophecy from this great discourse from Jesus on the subject.

Our last time together, we looked at the first 14 verses on the subject: "THE SIGNS OF THE END OF THE AGE." Now, today, we come to Vs 15. I want to look at a great event that will occur in the middle of the tribulation period.

Matthew chapter 24 verse 15: <sup>3!</sup> (READ)

### PRAYER

Let's review. You will remember if you have been with me in this series of messages, that we are discussing the importance of the three questions that <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ ask of Jesus by the disciples in Vs 3... In Vs 1 and 2, Jesus had just predicted that the Temple would be completely destroyed. That every stone of the Temple would be torn down. Not one stone would be left standing upon another. All would be torn down.

So, they ask him the question in Vs 3.. "Tell us, when will these things be." That is...when would the temple be destroyed?

Jesus answered that question in Luke chapter 21. And history tells us that the prophecy was fulfilled. In 70 A.D. the Roman governor, Titus, laid siege to the city of Jerusalem. When he entered Jerusalem, he completely destroyed the Temple. Titus literally took one stone off of another in order to gain the precious metals that was used to build the Temple.

Then the disciples ask two other questions: (1) What would be the sign of your coming. And (2) what would be the sign of the end of the age?

A couple of weeks ago, I mentioned a little about the meaning of this term "end of the age." Again, I remind you. This is not referring to the church age. The church age began on the day of Pentecost. And it will end at that point of time known as the RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH.

The word "rapture" is a Greek word translated in I Thess 4:17 as "caught up" or "to seize." We will be caught up together with those who are dead in Christ. And we will meet the Lord in the air. This event is called the RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH. It is a sudden removal of all Christians by God. And it will end what is commonly referred to as the church age.

But, this church age is not the age that is under discussion, here, in Matthew 24. Even though the church age is in the age under discussion. The church was not known to the Nation of Israel in the times of Jesus.

So, in this discourse by Jesus in Matthew 24, Jesus is referring to a Jewish age which was the last age before the GREAT NEW AGE would be ushered in....which is referred to as a time of blessing for Israel and having all the promises of the O.T. fulfilled. The Messiah will be on the throne of David in Jerusalem. That is the NEW AGE. Jesus is talking about the age right before the NEW ONE. The NEW AGE is the same as the one Thousand years reign of Christ mentioned in Revelation chapter 20.

So, Jesus in Matthew 24 is talking about the age that is going to end right before the physical return of Christ. And the disciples knew about that age. And they ask him the question: WHAT IS THE SIGN OF THE END OF THE AGE?" The end of the great tribulation.

Now, Jesus unfolded the signs of the end of the age in verses 4-14. And we looked at those signs last week. There were six major signs. In Vs 14 Jesus ends by saying: "Then shall the end come." The end of the age. The end of the Jewish age. I hope that is clear.

Now, in Vs 15, Jesus steps back a moment to discuss the middle of the tribulation period. The tribulation period is referring to the last 7 years before the end of the age. At the middle of that 7 year period, a great event is going to occur. It is described in Vs 15.

Jesus says..Vs 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.

This "abomination of desolation" is referring to a person. When this person stands in the Holy Place, or the Temple, let the reader understand.

Now, there are a couple of things being assumed here. One, that there is a Temple in Jerusalem. Number two, that there is some individual who is going to desecrate it.

And Jesus says that this is spoken of by Daniel the Prophet. So, dear friends, will you turn, please, to the book of Daniel in the O.T. Let's turn to Daniel chapter 9. Daniel chapter 9 beginning at Vs24. This is the prophecy known as the 70th week.

(Read 9:24-27)

Dan 9  
Dan 9

*omit* This may be very confusing to you. But let me explain it in these terms. ... This great event, according to Jesus, is the key factor that will tell the nation of Israel that the time of Jacobs troubles ~~the one~~ ~~and the~~ great tribulation is now upon them.

*SOPHLY*

And you must understand something about this....7 years or the 70th week of Daniel is all called the tribulation period....But, only the last 3½ years are referred to as the great tribulation...The great time of Israel's persecution.....Only the last 3½ years. During the first 3½ years Israel will be under the comfort and protection of the one world leader, the Antichrist, ~~himself~~, who will ~~confirm~~ <sup>make</sup> a Covenant with them. This is spoken of in Vs 27 of Daniel 9.

*Now,*

*Let me summarize Daniel ch 7 and 9*  
or Now, let's look at ~~the~~ passage from the following standpoints.

*(1)*

First of all the determination of who is involved...You have a prince who shall come. And in Vs 27 you have a covenant with many.... not with all ....but with many....This is important because we are talking about Daaniel's people, according to Vs 24, Israel and Jersualam. That is what we are talking about...

*omit*

And this Prince who shall come makes a covenant with many...not with all ....Not all Israel will follow this man...Not all will go along with the covenant...But most of Israel will..

*omit*

The Prince, that shall come, is called the Antichrist in other parts of the Bible. He is also called the <sup>man</sup> "man of sin"...the one world political leader"...the "beast" of Revelation 13.....~~He is the one.~~

And in the first 3½ years, according to Daniel, ~~that is~~ chapter 7, he arises as the little horn....That is, at first he is not important as a leader among the nations of the world. There will be 10 nations who are prominent at the time. All in the Mediterranean area....All these nations coming out-off the old Roman empire. Notice, he is a prince like unto that time. For the people of the Prince that shall come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. Rome did that....~~Therefore, in~~

*Dan 7  
1-8  
19-25*

*omit*

~~the end~~ a prince like unto Paul Time

*70 AD*

Therefore, in the end time what you will have is a 10 nation confederance, spoken of earilyer in Daniel, and it will be like a revived Roman Empire...A league ,of nations of \$ome sort. And this 10 nation confederation will experience a new voice....a little horn.. who will be the Antichrist.

out

He will arise quickly to power and he will take over control of the 10 nation confederacy, according to Daniel. This will be done either by force or covenant or by agreement.....And during the first three and a half years he will be the champion of Israel. He will support Israel and guarantee them security and safety....

And the Bible says he will, this Antichrist, will make a covenant with Israel for 7 years..But in the middle of those 7 years he will break his covenant...by causing the sacrific to end.....

So, this covenant that the Antichrist establishes, what is it? It can be none other than a restoration of the Temple sacrificial system in Israel...HOW DO WE KNOW THAT.....Because when he breaks it, he does so by causing the sacrific to stop.

Now, Israel today is not having sacrifics in Jersuaalem. But, they intend to..And there will be a temple rebuilt in Jersuaalem. And there will be a western leader, a world political leader, who will promise protection to Israel for his own ends....He will promise protection to Israel and made a covenant and restore their sacrificial Temple system.

I wish I had the time to tell you what is going on in relationship to the building of the Temple in Jersuaalem.....They have the plans. They have the people....And you know what else....It is all paid for..

Oh, my friends, we are living in the ~~times~~ <sup>shadow</sup> of the end..That is, that Israel is a Nation, today..And Isreal is putting their whole heart into that. It is there dream....AND..THEY..WILL..HAVE..THEIR..TEMPLE.

But, I have news for you, it is not God's Temple...God is going to build anyother one day. And it is in the Millinum, in the 1000 years reign of Christ...During the tribulation this is not God's Temple. It may be Isreaels, but it is not God"s.

But, Israel will build this Temple under the protection of this world political leader.

Now, I haven't got the time to go into this in great detail, but let me summarize this way. From the time of Daniel until the Messiah is cut-off, according to Daniel 9 is 69 weeks. A week is liken unto a year. And you will notice that there are two things that occur between the end of the 69th week and the start of the 70th week. ONE, Messiah is cut-off. That is He is crucified. TWO, THE Temple is destroyed. Both events happened in the First Century. All the time that is going on now is simply a gap..a period of time awaiting the 70th week of Daniel. OR, the 7 years tribulation.

Now, if you multiple 69 times 7 to get your years, you have 483 years. Please remember that a prophetic year is 360 days. If you would multiple that times your years, and then add the days for leap=years, YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO COME UP WITH??????YOU COME OUT TO AROUND MARCH OR APRIL 32 A.D. as the time when the Messiah would be cut off. That, dear friends, is pretty close. Jesus was crucified around 33 A.D. And Daniel prophecied this over 500 years before Jesus was crucified. And he gave exact details.

Thus, if the first part of Daniel's prophecy came to pass, I am confident that the 70th week will also happen. There will be a 7 years of great tribulation.

*OK* Now, let's come back to Matthew chapter 24. In the middle of those 7 years, a great event will take place.. And this event will serve as THE KEY..indicating that the time of Jacob's trouble is now upon them. WHAT IS THE EVENT? This man who is called the "abomination of desolation"....This Antichrist" will do something very evil.

WHAT WILL HE DO? According to 2 Thess chapter 2, <sup>This</sup> ~~this~~ man, the Abomination of Desolation, this Antichrist, will go into the Temple and he will sacrifice and he will then exalt himself as being God. And he will command that the Jewish people <sup>and the world</sup> worship him as God. And because of the peace that He has brought to the world, they will agree to do so.

Dear friends, when that happens, Jesus said, "there will be great tribulation such as the world has never seen." And please notice what will happen.

(1) Number one, in verses 16 thr 20, Jesus is saying BEWARD! PERSECUTION IS COMING AND THERE WILL BE NO WHERE YOU CAN RUN AND HIDE.....NO WHERE!

Now, please remember..this is all taking place during the last half of the tribulation period. Great persecution upon the nation of Israel <sup>and upon the world</sup>

(2 )Then secondly, I notice the extend of this tribulation in verses 21-22, both on the world population and upon the elect.

Please remember that the word "elect" in this discourse is not referring to the church, The word "elect" is referring to ~~those~~ <sup>Those</sup> who come to Christ during the tribulation period. That is very important. WHY? Because if you do't understand that, you will get confused in trying to interpret this passage.

Vs 21 says, For there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now." Never in the history of the world has there been such tribulation. NOR,..will there be any like it again. In that day, you will not have a problem trying to decide whether or not this is the great tribulation. It will be evident to all.

Notice Vs 22, "And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved."

That is how severe it will be. When you read the book of Revelation you realize that literally thousands upon thousands of people all over the world are going to die. On one occasion 1/4th of the world population. On another occasion 1/3 of what's left. And on and on it goes. It will be terrible judgment, persecution. And the whole world will experience it. WHY? Because the whole world will forsake God and worship the Antichrist.

"AND UNLESS THOSE DAYS HAD BEEN CUT SHORT"...that is limited by God to just 7 years, unless it be cut short no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect....the remnant, those who will turn to the Lord during the tribulation period....those days shall be cut short."

(3 )Third, in verses 23-28, notice the effect of the deception in that day. And there is a warning here. Vs 23 says that "many will say they <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ Christ, but don't believe it."

Vs 26.. "If therefore they say to you, behold he is in the wilderness do not go forth, or behold, he is in the inner rooms, do not believe them. For just as the lightning comes from the East and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be."

The idea here is not only suddenness, but also that his coming will be visible to all. So, don't believe the guy who says, "HAY, WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH OVER HERE IN THE DESERT" Or, "We have found the Messiah in the inner room." Don't believe it.

Dear friends, when Jesus comes every eye shall see and every tongue shall confess Jesus as Lord. When Jesus comes at the end of the 7 years tribulation, the whole world will see him.

Do not be misled. Do not believe it when you hear about secret Messiahs in different parts of the world.

Vs 28.. "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather." WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? Dear friends, that is referring to the great battle of Armageddon. You can read all about it in Zechariah chapter 14. At the end of the tribulation period there will be a great battle centered in and around Jerusalem. A battle involving the nations of the world. And you will know that this is the spot where Christ is going to return by the simple fact that here is where the vultures are gathering. And they are gathering because of the tremendous judgment of that battle.

THEN CHRIST SHALL STAND ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES. AND HE SHALL RULE THE WORLD.

(~~Q~~) Now, when we come to vs 29, we have the answer to the <sup>Final</sup> question; what will be the sign of your coming.

Notice Vs 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, and then the sign of the son of man will appear in the sky. And then all the tribes of the earth will ~~know~~ <sup>know</sup>. And they will see the son of man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory."

WOW!! That will be tremendous. In talking about this event, Zechariah chapter 12 says that they will look---that is, the whole world will look upon Him whom they have pierced."

Dear friends, can you imagine what it will be like to see Jesus with those nail prints in His hands and the wound in His side? Every eye will see and know that Jesus is here.

And the Bible says that when this happens, Vs 31, God will send His holy angels and gather His elect. The elect is referring to all those folks who came to know the Lord during the tribulation period. He will gather the elect to reign with the saints during the millennium period.

Oh, my friends, the Bible teaches that Christ is coming. He is coming. And whenever I teach about prophecy, I can't help but remember that the first thing on the calendar is UNKNOWN to the world. The first thing on the prophetic calendar, the next thing that is going to happen, you will have no preparation for..NOT ONE MINUTE...The Bible says that it will happen in a moment, ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> a twinkling of an eye. It will happen that fast. And Jesus will come in the air for his church.

This sudden event is called the rapture of the church. And we who are believers will be caught up in the air to meet Jesus. And then the world passes into tribulation.

And if you are not part of the rapture, and you have been in this service, today, then I say to you in all love, there is no hope for you. WHY? Because you have heard the Gospel. OH, there will be millions that will be saved in that tribulation period. But, they come out of every tongue, nation, and tribe of peoples who have never heard the gospel. But, they will hear it for the first time under the preaching of the 144,000 Jews and a great host of believing Gentles.

But, dear friends, <sup>o</sup>you are hearing the Gospel, today. And you have this opportunity to receive Christ <sup>o</sup>~~asa~~ your Lord and Saviour.

Make this a day of joy ---Receive Christ as your Lord and Saviour.

LET US CLOSE IN PRAYER