

## Matthew 24:1-14 The Prophecies of the End Times Part 1

Today we start a new chapter, Matthew chapter 24. Today our focus is on verses 1 through 14. We are in these last three chapters of this section in Matthew chapters 5 through 25. We are in Matthew 23 through 25, The Prophecies of the End Times.

And we are studying the sermons on judgment. And we just finished studying the two-part series on The Eight Woes pronounced by Jesus upon the leaders and religious people who were hypocrites in Jesus's eyes. As actors just responding according to the script, rather than from the heart. And this is all leading up to Matthew chapter 24 where we have the actual prophecies of the end times.

But we saw last week in chapter 23 verse 36 concerning the eight woes, **Truly I say to you all these things will come upon this generation.** *Generation* being a type or kind of people. He is talking about the Jewish people, the Hebrew people. This generation will not pass away. All these things will come upon this generation.

But He went on to say in chapter 23 in verse 37, The Condition of Jerusalem. He said, **Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one killing the prophets and stoning the ones having been sent to her. How often I desired to gather together your children which way a hen gathers her checks under her wings! And you did not desire it.** So their rejection of His invitation to come, that is why the destruction, that is why the sermons of judgment are being given.

The Conclusion for Jerusalem, verses 38 and 39 of chapter 23. **Behold your house is being left to you desolate.** *House* being *the Temple*, a quote from Jeremiah 22:5. **For I say to you, You should never see Me from now on; not until you should say, "Blessed is the One coming in the name of the Lord."** So you will not see Me again until My second coming and until then your house is going to be left to you desolate.

That leads us into the text for today, Matthew 24:1-2, The Prophecy of the Destruction of the Temple. **And having gone out** verse 1, **Jesus was going from the Temple.** Very picturesque language, showing a processes that is taking place. He has left the temple and He is going away from the temple. He is going out now. **And His disciples came near to point out to Him the buildings of the temple.** So they were pointing out to Him this magnificent structure. Each stone of the temple was between forty and sixty feet long, approximately twelve feet high and twelve feet wide, weighing about one hundred tons each. It took Herod over forty years to finish this magnificent structure so the Jews would have a temple to worship in. So Jesus said, **Your house will be left you desolate.** But as they were going out the disciples were pointing out to Jesus, looking back now on it, at this magnificent structure of stones. Because He says it is going to be left desolate, but look how big and beautiful it is. And the Jewish people in their worship used to go into the temple area and they would hang jewelry on these stones, gold and silver and gems to beautify the inside of the temple. So it is a magnificent structure to see. So the disciples were pointing out to Him how magnificent it is, and yet You say it is going to be left you desolate.

So in the middle of verse 2 Jesus says, **Truly I say to you, never will be left one stone upon stone which never will be thrown down!** He says, "See all these stones? This building you just pointed out to Me? Not one stone is going to be left upon another. It is all going to be torn down." This was literally fulfilled in 70 AD less than forty years from this point in time. In 70 AD Titus the Roman general rode into Jerusalem and in the last siege against the city, he had surrounded the city. In the last siege against the city, he destroyed the people, and destroyed the city. And the leaders of the Jews in their last ditch effort to save themselves went inside the Temple area and barricaded themselves in, so the Roman soldiers set the place on fire. It was so hot that all the jewels melted down in the cracks of the stones. Now for the soldiers, their reward for all of their work was the bounty that they would get from their enemies. So they wanted the jewels, they wanted the gold, they wanted the silver, but it had melted down through the stones. And so they literally took the temple down stone by stone to get to all that wealth, just as Jesus said it would do. Fire melted the gold and silver. It was literally fulfilled what Jesus said.

Matthew 24:3 The Probing of Three Questions. Their Curiosity, in verse 3, now that Jesus had made the statement that not one stone is going to be left upon another. **And while He was sitting upon the Mount of Olives.** So now He has traveled, they have traveled as a group, but He has traveled east outside of Jerusalem, down into the Kidron Valley and up the other side and to the top of the Mount of Olives. And it is now that the disciples came to Him privately. Luke says that there were four disciples that came to Him privately. **Saying, Tell us when will these things be? And, what is the sign of Your coming and of the completion of the age?** The last question is a two-parter. But there are actually three questions here:

- 1) When will these things be?
- 2) And what is the sign of Your coming?
- 3) and of the completion of the age?

So, tell us the whole prophecy schedule.

In Matthew 24:4-14 we have The Pains of Birth. Matthew 24:4 is very important. **And having answered, Jesus said to them, See that not anyone should mislead you.** The word *deceive* in the English text is literally the word *mislead*, not for the word *deceive*. **Do not let anyone mislead you.**

There are movements today about these end times prophecies and people are joining in with the movement. It raises its head every few years and people jump on the bandwagon, especially with the news and how it relates to the Bible. But I have listed for you seven points about prophecy that you need to know so you are not misled about what these prophetic signs and prophecies mean.

- 1) First of all, all prophecies concerning the end times are based on Daniel chapter 9 verses 24 through 27. All prophecies concerning the end times are based upon Daniel chapter 9 verses 24 to 27, especially the 70th week of Daniel in chapter 9 verse 27. Last week we studied that for the end of Matthew chapter 23 - how Daniel is broken up, Daniel 9:24-27.

Now the 70th week, there are seventy weeks, seventy sevens listed in Daniel. In the first sixty-nine sevens is the time when the command was given for the Jews to go back and restore and rebuild Jerusalem after it was destroyed back then in 400 BC. And from the time the command was given until the cutting off of the Messiah was sixty-nine sevens or 483 years. We understand the sevens to be weeks of years. 483 years from the time the command went to the time that Jesus rode into Jerusalem, it was 483 years to the day. But there is a there is a 70th week that is separate from the rest of the sixty-nine sevens. The 70th week is called the tribulation period. It is one segment of seven years. What is important to understand is that 70th week of Daniel in Daniel 9 verse 27 is what these prophecies, end times prophecies are built upon.

2) Secondly, the 70th week of Daniel comes after the rapture. The rapture is in I Thessalonians chapter 4 where when Christ comes, He calls all believers to come with Him and that is when the tribulation period starts. The 70th week of Daniel is divided into four sections:

1 - The pains of birth. That is the one we are in today. The first three and a half years of the tribulation, pains of birth.

2 - The pivotal point, secondly, is the midpoint of the tribulation. Halfway point when the abomination of desolation is set up in the temple. That is when the antichrist sets up his image in the holy of holies, and we will discuss that more next week as we take verse 15, the midpoint, the pivotal point.

3 - The third section is the perils of tribulation. That is the last three and a half years of The Great Tribulation.

And by the way in terminology the entire seven years is called The Tribulation Period. The first three and a half years are called The Pains of Birth, which is the tribulation, just tribulation. The last three and a half years is called The Great Tribulation according to verse 21 of chapter 24 of Matthew. But the entire seven years is called The Tribulation Period. So you have The Tribulation: Pains of Birth. You have The Great Tribulation, the last three and a half years. And then you have The Tribulation Period which designates the entire seven years.

So the pivotal point halfway through the tribulation period, the antichrist sets up his image in the holy of holies it is called The Abomination of Desolation. And again will get into the next week. And thirdly, the third section is the perils of tribulation, the last three and a half years of The Great Tribulation.

4 - And the fourth section is the promise of His coming, the second coming of Christ.

3) So that brings us to point number 3, in Matthew these four sections are right in a row. The pains of birth called the tribulation in verses 4 through 14; the pivotal point, or mid-trib is verse 15; The Great Tribulation, the perils of tribulation verses 16 to 28; and then the promise of the coming of Christ verses 29 through 31.

- 4) Fourthly, we want to point out to you that the end-time prophecies are centered on Israel and the Jewish people, not on America. If prophecies are ever presented as centered on things that are happening here in America, the United States, you know it has got to be off, because all the prophecies deal with the Jewish people. We experience a residual from that, but the center point of prophecy is Israel and the Jews.
- 5) Fifthly, Matthew took his outline of the 70th week of Daniel from Mark chapter 13. And they both recorded what is called The Olivet Discourse because He gave the message on the Mount of Olives, so it is called The Olivet Discourse.
- 6) Sixthly, the misunderstanding of the prophecies of the last days is based upon combining Luke's account with Matthew and Mark's accounts, as if they are the same message, and that is a big mistake. Luke has an account of the last days, but his is not the same message. It is given in different order, but it has a lot of the same information in it.
- 7) Which brings us to point number seven, about Luke's version of the last days. It includes some of the same information but given at a different time covering different stages of the 70th week of Daniel.

In Luke chapter 21 verses 5 and 6 Jesus is still in the temple when He gives Luke's message, He is not up on the Mount of Olives. He is still in the temple area, so this is a different message.

Luke 21:7 records different questions. They ask, "When will these things be?" And secondly, "What sign will there be when these things come to pass?"

Thirdly, in Luke 21:8-11 Jesus talks about the first part of the tribulation. Then in 21:12 He says, "Before all these things," so He skips the mid-trib pivotal point about putting the abomination of desolation in the temple. He skips that and all the activities dealing with that and says, "Before all these things." He gives the first part of the tribulation just like Matthew and Mark but then He says, "Now before all these things," so He gives something before the 70 weeks of Daniel, in which He describes the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. So He goes back when the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD and His account of the last days, which Matthew and Mark do not do. Then He switches back to the promise of His coming in Luke 21 verses 25 through 28.

So Matthew and Mark have the same message of the last days. Luke has also a message that Jesus gave on the last days, but it is a different message. Some with the same information, but not in the same order as Matthew and Mark do. So if you combine Luke with Matthew and Mark and mix it all together and try to come up with prophecies about the end times, you are going to be misled. You cannot combine the two messages. You have to take them each for what they represent and what they present.

So we are in Matthew chapter 24 verses 4 to 14 the pains of birth, or the tribulation period. **And having answered, Jesus said to them, See that not anyone should mislead you.** Do not be misled. Do not jump on the bandwagon when all the sensationalists get up and try to

lead people on the radio and TV and in books. Understand what these texts mean and then you will not be misled.

In verses 5 to 14, The Characteristics of the Tribulation. So now this is the first three and a half years called the pains of birth or the tribulation, the first part three and a half years.

The first four points line up with the first four seals broken in the book of Revelation, in Revelation chapter 6. If you go through the book of Revelation it presents the judgment poured out by God upon the earth. In Revelation chapter 6 there is a book with seven seals and each seal that is broken a different judgment occurs upon the earth. The first four seals that are broken line up with the first four activities here in this tribulation period.

In verse 5, it coincides with the first seal broken in Revelation chapter 6 verse 2. Verse 5 says, **For many will come upon the basis of My name, saying, I am the Christ. And they will mislead many.** So people are going to rise up and say that they are Christ and it is going to mislead many people. The first seal in Revelation chapter 6 verse 2 is a seal where a white horse comes down and one sitting on the white horse. And one sitting on the white horse has a bow in his hand and he has a **στέφανος** (stephanos) crown, a wreath crown. And many people think that is this the coming of Christ. But it is not. It is the false Christ. In Revelation chapter 19 when the second coming of Christ is presented, Christ comes on a white horse and He is wearing on His head *diadems*, kingly crowns. And a sharp sword comes out of His mouth to defeat His enemies. So the horsemen in Revelation 6:2 is the false Christ that is prophesied to come and will mislead many people.

Verse 6 coincides with the second horse and broken seal, in Revelation chapter 6 verses 3 and 4. **But you will be about to hear of wars and rumors of wars. See, do not be disturbed. For it is necessary for all these things to happen, but the end is not yet.** I emphasize to you that there will be wars and rumors of wars, just as there are now but in the tribulation period it is even more substantial. He says, **Even then, see that you are not disturbed.** Do not get all upset about it. **For it is necessary for all these things to happen** because it is building up to war. War with Christ at His second coming but the end is not yet. This lines up with the red horse when the second seal is broken Revelation chapter 6 verses 3 and 4.

Verse 7, **For nation will be raised up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be famines and pestilences (that is, diseases) and earthquakes against many places.** Literally that last phrase *against many places* is a Greek prepositional phrase that means *everywhere*. This lines up with the black horse, the breaking of the third seal. The black horse comes out and it represents the famines and the diseases and the earthquakes that are going to be taking place, but it is going to be everywhere. It is not going to be just general areas of the earth. It is going to be constantly everywhere.

Then a comment by Jesus in verse 8, **But all of these things are the beginning of birth pains.** That is why we have entitled the section The Pains of Birth. He said, "These are just birth pains." This is just when that when a woman begins her labor to give birth. These things are just the beginning. The word *sorrows* in the English text is the Greek word for *birth pains*.

Verse 9, **Then they will deliver you over into tribulation.** This is to the Jews. This is the first three and a half years of the tribulation period. They are going to deliver you over into tribulation, speaking to the Jews, it is important to realize that. **And they will kill you, and you will be being hated by all the nations on account of My name.** This lines up with the pale horse and the fourth seal that is broken. And the rider that comes out on the pale horse, Revelation chapter 6 verses 7 and 8, where death comes and hatred and nations, on account of My name.

Verse 10, the next characteristic. **And then many will be offended, and they will deliver over one another and will hate one another. And many false prophets will be raised up and will mislead many. And on account of lawlessness increasing, the love of many will be growing cold.** The times and conditions in which these judgments are brought brings even families against each other, false prophets rising up. And because lawlessness is rampant the love of many will be growing cold.

The comment in verse 13, **But the one who has endured to the end, this one will be saved.** Please notice the literal translation, *but the one who has endured*, not *the one who will endure*. **The one who has endured to the end, this one will be saved.** So, it is not the one who will endure, but the one who has endured. It is presented the way it is presented by Christ as a proof. After all these things happen, the one who endures to the end this is the one who is going to be saved. It is the proof of salvation.

He says in verse 14, **And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the habitable world for a testimony to all the nations, and then will come the end.** Now in this movement, this end times movement, people also have a doctrine (a teaching) that quotes this verse. "The gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the habitable world, and then the end will come," means that we need to get out and start doing our job. The Lord cannot come until we get out and start preaching the gospel. And the whole world has to hear and then Christ will come back. Some even have gone as far as to say the reason why He has not come back so far is because we have not been doing our job. We have not been out preaching, reaching people for Christ.

Well, in the tribulation period there are 144,000 Jews, believing Jews, that are sealed by God so that no harm can come to them. 144,000 Jews as a testimony to Christ.

Secondly, in Revelation chapter 14 verses 6 and 7 it says an angel will be flying in midheaven preaching the gospel and the whole world is going to see him and hear him.

And thirdly, in Revelation chapter 11 verses 3 to 13, there are going to be two witnesses in the streets of Jerusalem preaching the gospel for three and a half years. And they are going to try to kill them, and God will not let them. Finally, He allows them to kill these two witnesses and the whole world rejoices because they have been plagued by listening to the gospel by these two witnesses. But then after three days of lying in the streets dead, God raises them up, and calls them up to heaven. Shocks everyone.

So the gospel is going to be preached before Christ comes. It is not up to us to reach every person for Christ before He comes. It is not our job. Sharing Christ with others is a great privilege. But to have that kind of burden put on you - that the reason why Christ has not come yet is because you have not been doing your job, is totally false. Again, do not let anybody mislead you.

Next week we will take the next three sections, (1) the pivotal point - the abomination of desolation in the holy of holies, and (2) the perils of tribulation the last three and a half years of tribulation, and (3) the promise of Christ coming, next week verses 15 through 31.

Let's close with prayer.