

Matthew 24:15-31 The Prophecies of the End Times Part 2

This morning we are in Matthew 24 verses 15 through 31. This is actually studying The Prophecies of End Times, part 2. It is important that in order to continue on with the lesson for today that we review from last time.

Remember in Chapter 23 the Lord pronounced eight woes. His grief over the destruction of His people there in Jerusalem because they have rejected His invitation. And He said to them in verse 38 of Chapter 23, **Behold your house is being left to you desolate**, the *house* being the temple. Very powerful words.

Which when we started chapter 24 last week, chapter 24 at verse 1, **And having gone out from the temple** - Jesus was going from the temple - **and His disciples came near to point out to him the buildings of the temple**. The Lord has just said, "Behold your house is left to you desolate," but they are pointing out to Him as they are walking out the great stones of the temple. Some 40 to 60 feet long, 12 feet wide, 12 feet high, almost 100 tons apiece. Stone stacked on top of each other to make up this magnificent structure. And Jesus said, "Your house will be left to you desolate," and the disciples are pointing it out to Him - the beauty of the structure that He just said would be desolate.

In verse 2, **Jesus said to them, Do you not see all of these things? Truly I say to you, and this is literal translation, never will be left one stone upon stone which never will be thrown down!** That was fulfilled some thirty-eight years later after He said this. In 70 AD Titus the Roman General made his last siege on Jerusalem, killed the people in it, burned the temple. And all the jewels and all of the gold and silver that was hung on these great stones by the people as they came in, melted in the fervent heat and melted down into the cracks of the stones. And the Romans literally took this temple apart stone by stone to get the jewels and the gold and silver. So it was fulfilled just as Jesus said in 70 AD, some thirty-eight years after He actually made the statement.

Verse 3 says, **And while He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples 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?** So He says in verse 4, **And when He answered, Jesus said to them, See that not anyone should mislead you.** So before He answers their questions, He warns them do not let anybody mislead you. The word *deception* in most English translations is this word *mislead, to lead astray*.

And we mentioned to you several points, key points last week. I will go over just a couple of them with you this week to make sure you are not misled over Jesus' answer to the questions.

First of all, all prophecies concerning the end times are based upon Daniel chapter 9 verses 24 to 27. All end time prophecies are based on that segment of time. It is known as the seventy weeks of Daniel. Seventy sevens. The sevens represent years. That is 490 years of history with Israel.

The first sixty-nine of the seventy, the first 483 years was from the time the order was given to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the Son of God to be crucified in Jerusalem. It was 483 years to the day that the order was given. Recorded back in Nehemiah chapter 2 verses 1 through 8 to the time that Jesus was crucified that week that He entered in, was 483 years from the time of the prophecy. But then there is one seven left, one period of seven years left, the seventieth week, the seventieth seven of Daniel. And that is what all end time prophecies are based upon, especially Daniel chapter 9 verse 27 that seventieth week of Daniel. That is what we are dealing with in these end time prophecies.

Next, the end times prophecies are centered on the Jewish people. End time prophecies are not centered on the United States, they are centered on the Jews and Israel. We experience some of the effects from God's prophecies being fulfilled with Israel, but it is not centered on the United States. And the people that are in these end time movements today are caught up in movements that use the United States and the activities and headlines in the United States as fulfillment of prophecy. Of course, it does not get fulfilled, it just moves on to the next sensational presentation as to the fulfillment of the prophecies. Reading prophecies out of the Bible and then applying them to the United States and that will mislead a lot of people. And a lot of people are being misled.

Luke's account in Luke chapter 21 is different in message and circumstances than Matthew's account of the end time prophecies. So it would be wrong to combine Luke and Matthew together and make one big prophecy out of it. Like I said, Luke's is different. Luke chapter 21 is different, different time, different information. So, **Do not let anybody mislead you**, He says.

Verse 5, under the circumstances of the tribulation, **For many will come upon the basis of My name, saying, I am the Christ. And they will mislead many.** This corresponds to the first seal that is broken in the book of Revelation, Revelation chapter 6 verse 2 where the white horse emerges at the breaking of the seal. The false Christ, the false Messiah.

Verse 6, **But you will be about to hear of wars and rumors of wars. See, do not be disturbed.** Interesting. Do not be troubled, do not be disturbed when you hear about wars and rumors of wars. One of the headlines that people use in these end times movements is that there is always a war or rumor of a war. And Jesus said, "Do not let it disturb you," but a lot of people are being disturbed and troubled. **For it is necessary for all these things to happen, but the end is not yet.** Not even close. So do not get troubled. This *hear of wars and rumors of wars* corresponds to the second seal, broken in Revelation chapter 6 verses 3 and 4, where the red horse emerges at the breaking of the seal.

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.** This corresponds to the third seal broken in Revelation chapter 6 verses 5 and 6, where the black horse emerges. **But all of these things are the beginning of birth pains.** That is why this section is called The Pains of Birth. These are just the beginning of birth pains. English texts says *sorrows* and it is literally the word for a woman going in labor, *birth pains*.

Verse 9, **Then they will deliver you over into tribulation, and they will kill you, and you will be being hated by all the nations on account of My name.** Remember we are dealing with Israel, dealing with the Jews. He is telling them you will be hated by all nations. You will be killed. This corresponds to the fourth seal broken in Revelation chapter 6 verses 7 and 8 when the seal is broken, the pale horse emerges.

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. But the one who has endured to the end, this one will be saved. As I mentioned to you last week notice the wording, this is the literal translation, *the one who has endured*, not, *the one who will endure*. Will endure shows a promise. But the literal translation shows that this is a proof. The proof that a person is saved is they have endured to the end. So for the Jewish people who endure all of this to the end, they are the ones that are saved.

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. As I mentioned to you last week, the last thing we pointed out to you is there is a movement that says Jesus said He will come when the Gospel is preached the whole habitable world. So the reason He has not come yet is because we Christians have not been doing our job. We have not been out preaching the gospel to the world. So there are churches that do fundraisers, extract money from people, just to send out literature, and try to reach the world for Christ so that He will come back. And the only reason that things are so bad right now in certain situations is because Jesus should have come back earlier but He could not because we have not been doing our job. But as I told you also last week, there are going to be 144,000 Jews sealed during the tribulation period as a testimony to Christ for the whole world.

Also in Revelation chapter 14 verses 6 and 7 tells us that an angel will be flying in midheaven preaching the gospel to the world during those times of tribulation.

Then there are two witnesses. In Revelation chapter 3 verse 13 there will be two witnesses testifying in Jerusalem. And they are going to try to kill them and will not be able to do it. But then God allows them to kill these two witnesses and they lie in the street for three days, and the world rejoices because of their death. And then God raises them up from the dead off the street and up into heaven. These witnesses have been testifying about the Lord all through the tribulation period.

So the whole world will be reached with the gospel before the coming of Christ, but it will not be the church. It will not be the job of Christians to get out and reach the world in their human effort so that Christ can come back. He will come back when the tribulation period is over, after the judgments are meted out. And we will study that more as we go through these texts.

For today we are in the second phase. The first phase is The Pains of Labor and verses 4 to 14 is the first three and one half years of the tribulation period. It is a seven-year period. Verses 4 to 14 is the first three and one half years. But then there is the second phase or stage, which is one verse, verse 15, The Abomination of Desolation. It is called The Pivotal Point,

right in the middle of the tribulation. The antichrist will set up his image in the holy of holies and that setting up of his image is called The Abomination of Desolation.

Verse 15, **Therefore whenever you should see the abomination of desolation, which had been spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (the one reading, let him understand).** So he is speaking to Jews who are familiar with their Old Testament Scriptures. He is referring to those people who are reading and studying Daniel, showing even more that this is Jewish people that he speaking to and dealing with.

The Abomination of Desolation is not a Hebrew term, it is actually a Greek term from the Greek Old Testament translation of the Hebrew, called the Septuagint. It is found three places in the Old Testament: Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:31; and Daniel 12:11. The actual event of the abomination of desolation being put up in the in the holy of holies is found in Revelation chapter 13 verses 14 through 18.

Abomination, **βδέλυγμα** (bdelugma), in the Greek is a word that means the object of disgust, something appalling, something disgusting - the abomination of desolation. The Bible tells us that the antichrist is going to help the Jews rebuild their temple and help them begin sacrificing once again. Their temple is not erect there in Jerusalem, they do not sacrifice or make sacrifice for their offering. But he is going to help them build their temple. He is going to help them get back to sacrificing and then all of a sudden he is just going to step in and stop the sacrificing and put his image in the holy of holies, the most holy place in the temple. And he is going to turn on everybody. This is found for in Daniel 9:27, that three and one half year period when he is going to break his contract with Israel and he is going to set up his image.

But this is going to be a religious event. We have to understand that because many people get concerned about taking the number of the beast. Is it a credit card? Or should you take a number on the back your hand? What really is happening here? Well, actually the antichrist states in the breaking of his contract with Israel that in order to buy and sell in the economic system of the world you must have a number. And it is a number of his name, and the number is six, six, six. And you have to take the number and in order to get the number you have to worship the image in the holy of holies.

So there is a whole lot to it than just people floating around some of their ideas about taking numbers. So he puts up his image and you must worship the image to get the number. So you have to join his religion. You have to join his religious movement. Then you get the number and then you can buy and sell your goods. If you refuse to worship the beast and his image, if you refuse to take the number, then you are out. You are actually killed. You are actually put to death, found and put to death, but you are not eligible to participate in the economic system of the world without it.

So he says, **Therefore whenever you should see the abomination of desolation, which had been spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (the one reading, let him understand).** So he is appealing to people, to read and to know there are prophecies of Daniel in order to understand what he is talking about, about the abomination of desolation.

Then in verses 16-28, The Perils of Tribulation. The abomination of desolation marks the beginning of the great tribulation described in detail in Revelation chapters 6 through 16 where the seals, the trumpet, and bowl judgments are opened. So he says after the abomination of desolation is set up in the temple, he says in verse 16, so this is the beginning of the tribulation once that happens. **Then let the ones in Judea flee into the mountains.** You see it is in Judea, it is to the Jews.

The one upon the housetop, let him not come down to take anything from out of his house. The Jews had flat roofs and they used the roof on the top as a patio where they could go and get away from the heat of the day, and go at night up on their patio. And their stairway would go up the side of the building to reach this patio.

So he says, **The one on the housetop, let him not come down to take anything from out of his house. And the one in the field, let him not turn back to take his clothes.** Working out in the field you see the abomination of desolation standing in the temple, do not even go back and get your clothes. Take off for the mountains.

But woe to the ones having a child in the womb, and the ones nursing in those days! You can imagine, he says, "Take off," and the woman is pregnant. Tough to run, tough to walk fast. Even nursing children, stopping to nurse the child. Woe to the ones. He does not say it is impossible, it is just a very grievous process to have to do that in those days.

And pray that your flight will not happen in winter nor in the Sabbath. Winters are very severe there in Jerusalem, it even snows. Or pray that it does not happen on the Sabbath. God says, "Keep the Sabbath day and make it holy," so what the Jews did is they made up rules that you can only travel one thousand yards on the Sabbath day. Anything more than that of breaking the Sabbath for work. So if they took steps and they kept track and they counted their steps, if they walked one thousand yards, then they would have to sit down right there in the road. They could not take another step beyond that, not until sundown. The Jewish days began at sundown. So if it is on the Sabbath day that this happens, and the Jews are fleeing out of town, they and their own limitations that they have put on themselves - could only go a thousand yards before they would have to stop and sit in the road until the Sabbath ended to continue their journey.

Verse 21, **For there will be then great tribulation.** That is why this section is called The Great Tribulation, verses 16 through 28. The perils of tribulation, it is a great tribulation. The first three and one half years is called Tribulation; then The Pivotal Point when the abomination of desolation is put up in the temple. Then there is The Great Tribulation, this is when all heaven breaks loose in judgement. **Such has not happened from the beginning of the world until now, and it should never happen.** So this is great devastation taking place because of that abomination of desolation that has been placed.

And except those days were shortened, all flesh would not be saved. So God has predetermined that these days will stop short of complete disaster and destruction. He has a time limit. If He did not shorten it, no flesh would be saved. **But on account of the elect, those days will be shortened.** The word *elect* is a special word brought over from the Old Testament. It is

a title for the Jewish people, the elect. God did not want to destroy His people so He shortened the period to three and a half years so His people would survive.

Verse 23, **Then if anyone should say to you, Look, here is the Christ! Or, Here! You should not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will rise up. And they will give great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.** If possible. It is not possible, that is the point. If it were possible to mislead the elect, they would. They are manifesting such signs and wonders and miracles; they are mimicking their own leader, the antichrist, who will demonstrate "all power and signs and false wonders" from II Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 9.

Verse 26, **Therefore if they should say to you, Look, he is in the wilderness; you should not go out. Look, he is in the private rooms, you should not believe it.** That happened twice in 1940 and 1944 where people said that Jesus is in private rooms, or He is out in the desert camping out, and you just do not know that He is here.

He says in verse 27, that His coming is going to come so suddenly. **For just as the lightning comes out from the east and shines as far as the west, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man.** So it is going to be public, visible, everybody will see it. It will come suddenly. It will not be secret.

He says in verse 28, **For wherever the carcass may be, there the eagles will be gathered together.** A better translation for the word *eagles* is the word *vulture*. For the carcasses, the vultures will be gathered together. This will happen when Jesus comes and defeats His enemies in the battle of what is called Armageddon. It is an event described in Revelation chapter 19 verses 17 through 21. A two hundred mile stretch of valley where the armies of the world will be gathered together to fight against Christ at His second coming. And He will slay them. And the blood will be as high as the horse's bridle. And it will be a very public event.

Next Matthew 24:29-31, The Promise of His Coming. The Characteristics of His Coming. **And immediately after the tribulation of those days.** His return will happen after the great tribulation, His second coming. Not the rapture, but the second coming. The rapture happens prior to the seventieth week of Daniel. Prior to the tribulation period, where the Lord comes and removes His people from the earth, except for the 144,000 that are sealed, the Jews that are sealed. **And immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give her light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.** A great cataclysmic event happening in the stars.

Three times during the great tribulation heavenly bodies will be radically altered under the sixth seal broken.

In Revelation chapter 6 verses 12 to 14 the stars and planets and forces of heaven are altered.

In Revelation chapter 8 verse 12 the fourth trumpet judgment, the heavens are altered again. In Revelation chapter 16 verse 10 the fifth bowl judgment, the heavens are altered again.

And now at His second coming, **The sun will be darkened the moon will not give her light, and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.** Powers of heavens are forces of energy that are in our solar system. **And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven. And then all the tribes of the land will wail.** The word *tribes* is a Jewish term. **All the tribes of the earth will wail.**

In Revelation chapter 1 verse 7 he tells us, **Behold He comes with the clouds; and every eye will see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all the tribes will wail because of Him.** Again making reference to Jews, that is Revelation chapter 1 verse 7.

And they will see the Son of Man coming upon the clouds of heaven with power and much glory. He is coming with the clouds, fulfillment of Daniel 7:13.

In Acts chapter 1 verses 10 and 11 you remember the Lord ascended up into heaven and the disciples were standing there watching Him ascend up into heaven and the angels asked them, "Why do you stand here staring up into heaven watching this One rise up to the clouds? He is going to come in like manner with the clouds." That is Acts chapter 1 verses 10 and 11. The actual event of this happening is Revelation chapter 19 verses 11 through 16.

And when He comes, verse 31, **He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the extremities of the heavens to the extremities of them.** So angels are going to be sent out with a loud trumpet - that is the ram's horn, the big shofar. You might have seen the Jewish people use them, and we had one out here once, playing it. It is a long horn with a curved shape to it. It is a ram's horn that the Jews blow for their feast times and their times of gathering. **And they will gather together His elect from the four winds.** His elect again is a Jewish term referred to as the nation of Israel in Isaiah chapter 45 verse 4 that Israel God says, is My elect.

So Jesus said, do not be misled. This is what is going to happen. This is order it is going to happen in. It is the pattern and formula for the seventieth week of Daniel. The tribulation of the first three and a half years. At the three and a half year mark the abomination of desolation. And once that is set up God's fury is unleashed for the next three and a half years against the nonbelieving world.

Even though people point out that some of these prophecies are happening in our day, these prophecies are different. It affects the whole world. When Jesus comes two thirds of the world has already died from these plagues and from the judgments that are to come.

Our text tells us that these things are going to happen everywhere. In verse 7 of Chapter 24, **And nation will be raised up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be famines and diseases, and earthquakes against many places.** And the prepositional phrase *against many places* means everywhere. It is not just going to be spotty here and there in places on the earth. It will be everywhere. It will be like tribulation that the world has never known, nor ever will, as we just read.

Now for the rest of chapter 24 and 25 Jesus is going to share parables and stories to illustrate what He has just said about the prophecies of the end times. So we will begin that next week.

Let's close with prayer.