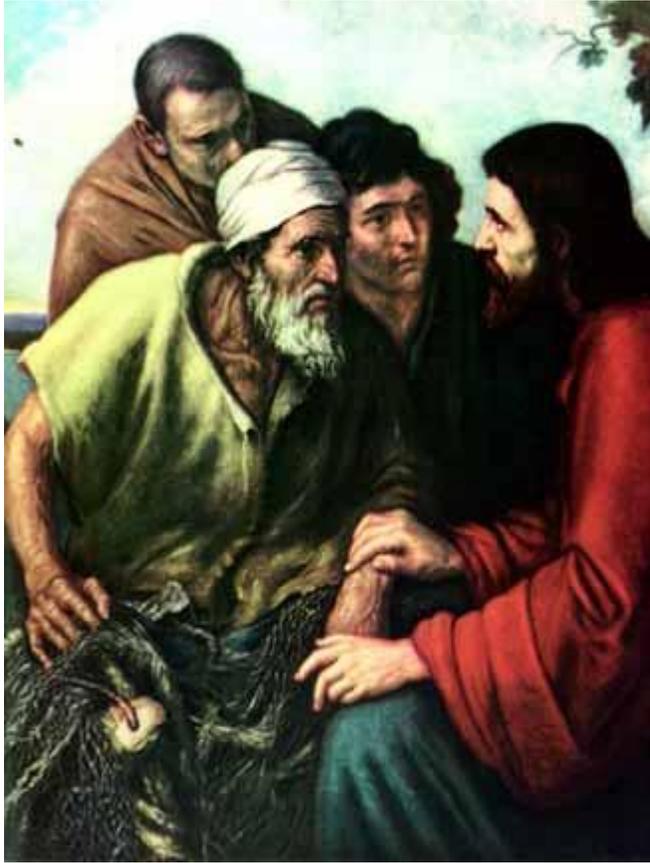


Jesus Teaches the End of the Age, Part I

By Pastor Mike Taylor

06/11/2014



Matthew 24:3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what {will be} the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" NASB.

Jesus has just come from the temple mount and prophesied that the temple would be torn down, "not leaving one stone upon another." This disturbed the disciples, as the temple was the center of their world, the world of the nation of Israel. The KJV has the last part of the above verse as "the end of the world." We know that it is more proper in context to use the "end of the age" as when Jesus comes back to rule for 1000 years. It will be on this very earth we now populate, but with major revisions to return the earth to its former glory when Adam and Eve walked with God in the garden. It will be the end of the world, as we know it. So all references to the "end of the world" literally as were buzz words of the Mayan Calendar's December 21, 2012 as the end of it all, simply is not true or biblical. But let us take a look at the signs that would precede the coming of the Son of Man in power and great glory.

I will do a line by line Bible study of this chapter that must be followed up with the next chapter of Matthew 25 in a follow up sermon, as all are connected, but let's take the first sign of the end of this age as we know it. Continuing in Matthew:

24:4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you.

24:5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.

Folks have taken this to mean that many will come claiming to be the Messiah. True, there have been many false messiahs that have claimed to be Him, but what was Jesus talking about? I don't believe He was talking about what many believe. It's pointing to false religions, false doctrines, and deception that will fill the churches in that day. Men claiming to be followers of Jesus Christ will use His name to appease the masses they wish to delude, These frauds and double agents would come in His name, that is, appearing to bear His authority. In particular, the name of "Christ" would be exploited as cover for their nefarious trickery, and by this ruse, great numbers of people would be deluded. The phrase, "saying, I am the Christ," should not be understood, as the New King James Version has punctuated it, to mean that many would come claiming to be the Messiah. No, they would come claiming that Jesus is the Messiah—a truth—and thereby gain people's trust. From that point forward, deception through doctrinal change, both major and minor, provides the means of deception. As the anonymous maxim puts it, "The nearer a lie to truth the more deceitful it is".

NEW AGE AND THE EMERGENT CHURCH

Folks, look around you. Has there ever been a time when there was *so much* false doctrine permeating our churches? They promote a *feel-good* gospel. They promote false healing, miracles, and signs used to deceive. All the while they have agents in the background who are setting up this charade to influence the masses to what end? Money! They are religious entertainers in our churches that use smoke and mirrors to fool the people looking for truth. I have never seen so much imagery and modern technology that gets the juices of these adherents to a feel good gospel all whooped up in a frenzy and elevates the man preaching a feel good sermon, instead of Jesus Christ. Jesus warned us of these “wolves in sheep clothing” that would come into to devour the sheep. They have continued unabated in these New Emergent Churches and promote a universal tolerant view that there are many roads to God. They preach that all religions will find the way to Heaven, meaning Gnostics, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, and Jews right along with true believers in Jesus Christ will all receive the same salvation and eternal life. All roads lead to God and all religions are the same. God is love and no one will go to any “hell”. This flies in the face of Acts 4:10-12, in which Peter asserts that only by the name of Jesus Christ is salvation possible. I call this Emergent theology, the “First Church of Blasphemy”. They make a mockery of the saving Grace of our Lord and Savior.

WAR AND RUMORS OF WARS

Jesus continues in Matthew:

24:6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

24:8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Men have been fighting each other for 2000 years since Jesus made this statement, but the last century of modern times has been the bloodiest of all the centuries past. More people died in this last 100 years of two world wars, and the various conflicts that have killed more people in them than the preceding 1900 years combined. Various wars and conflicts by count of the dead totals 262,000,000 people....that's millions, folks. And this was the “beginning of sorrows”. That's almost every man, woman and child that resides in this country we called the United States of America as a population count.

24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

24:10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

You look at other third world countries, the Middle East and other dictatorships say of Russia, or China, and it's not safe to be a Christian even in our modern times. It hasn't come to America YET, but Christians are becoming viewed increasingly with suspicion by the powers that be, even in our country, the USA. People are being slain for the name of Jesus Christ right now, even as you read this. Jesus said it would be so, and it is becoming more and more commonplace. As it was in Jesus day, being persecuted by the Romans and even the “Holy Roman Empire” (sic), has now come full circle to engulf our world with the same genocide of whole races and people who profess Jesus Christ and Him crucified. But stay tuned, as you haven't seen anything yet!!

THE GOSPEL PREACHED WORLDWIDE

24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

No other time in history has there been so many ways to transmit the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The technology has advanced at such a rapid pace, that an email sent across the world is delivered within seconds. The Gospel News has covered the entire earth. So what prevents the end of the age? I believe nothing, except the timing held by God the Father who knows when the last person will accept His offer of Grace.

JESUS REFERED TO PROPHECY in DANIEL 9 v. 27

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Jesus speaks of the Abomination of Desolation that Daniel spoke of, and says when you see this man standing in the temple of God, claiming to be God, then RUN:

24:16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

24:17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

24:18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

24:19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

24:22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Notice the people Jesus speaks of? He doesn't refer to the Gentiles, or the rest of the world, but those who live in Judea. Jesus takes level focus of only one group of people. He was talking about Israel. Observant Jews cannot travel more than a day's walk from their home on the Sabbath, and to travel with child is difficult. Pray it's not snowing, as it sometimes does in Israel and its cold making travel a problem. But Jesus warns them to get out, head for the hills...hide yourself. Don't take anything with you. Why? Because Israel will reject this "man" claiming to be a god and in his rage he will attempt to destroy the nation of Israel because of their rejection of him as an imposter. The Holocaust of the Nazi's will pale in the attempt of this man to destroy all remnant of the house of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I've spoken of it many times in sermons past. Israel will be refined as silver is in the fire. They will be persecuted and hunted down because they reject this "false messiah" and his "false prophet". Malachi chapter 3,

3:2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

3:3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

3:4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

How do you refine silver? You heat it red hot, but not too hot, or the silver is destroyed, but hot enough to remove the slag that floats to the top, to reveal the pure silver beneath. There is an old story of a question which arose within a lady's bible study group when they read this verse. They wondered about what it meant to be a refiner of silver. Knowing a silversmith within their area, they decided to see the process in action. As the silversmith heated the silver, he cautioned them that he must not heat it too hot, but just enough to remove the impurities. One woman asked, thinking of this verse, when do you know when the silver is purified? The silver smith smiled and said "When I can see my image in it"

That is what will be Israel's purification. Until our Lord and Savior can see His image in them, He will continue to allow the heat of persecution to turn them to their Messiah that they had rejected 2000 years earlier. Only when they realize this and proclaim, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." (Luke 13:35b.) , then swiftly, the Lord God will come to do battle for His people Israel and save them out of tribulation and set them as a crowning jewel of His city Jerusalem on mountain lifted high. He will save them all for the promise He made to their father's and because of His glorious Name. So much for Replacement Theology.

JESUS ALLUDES TO THE ANTICHRIST AND FALSE PROPHET

24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

24:25 Behold, I have told you before.

24:26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

Not only has there been false prophets and false messiahs leading up to this time, but I believe Jesus is talking of THE false messiah, and THE false prophet that all of the Gentile nations will follow who have pleasure in unrighteousness. He speaks to the Nation of Israel to believe it not, as the Gentiles who have rejected Jesus Christ and will follow whole hog after this charlatan who claims divinity. I submit that all nations will be fooled, as there is nothing to give them discernment of this falsehood, as they believe in themselves, and reject God. They follow a god on earth, that leads them in their wickedness. Paul warns of this in 2nd Thessalonians:

2:8, And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.

2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Notice the next few verses? Jesus, I believe, is giving an almost chronological order of the time leading up to His glorious appearing and the events that happen right after that.

24:27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

24:28 For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Some misinterpret this to mean the sun shining from the east to the west and all will see Him....I believe this is a reference to the sudden appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, suddenly, when they think not. As lightning flashes suddenly from the eastern part of the sky and flashes to the west, this will be sudden and without warning. All will know something has happened, as the signs are all around them. People missing, people screaming for loved ones that have vanished and the realization that an unexplained calamity has befallen their world. Untold havoc will rule the day.

But what of that next verse, verse 28? In the days Jesus lived in and we see it somewhat in our world here in the USA, carrion birds smell death. This verse is better translated as vultures, as eagles kill live prey, not dead ones. Vultures circle a carcass and many gather for this putrid feast. Jesus was making a comparison that Jerusalem was dead in spirit, and by extension of end time prophecy, saying that those who miss the greatest happening of our lifetime, will be devoured, as so much dead bodies as they are spiritually dead. Note that Revelation says that 2/3 of all mankind will be destroyed, by divine judgment, including natural disasters, and to a lesser degree, man-made persecution. I calculate upwards of 4-5 billion people will die in 7 short years. Notice in the opening lines of this sermon, 262 million people have died in the last 100 years by war....during the tribulation, this will be 15-20 times that amount, not millions, but billions of people who will die in seven short years, with the majority in the last half.

24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

24:31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Notice the progression of events as Jesus explains them. Jesus came prior as a flash of lightning, quickly and without warning. People are then dying by the millions into the billions called the tribulation and then the Great Tribulation, where judgment from God gets kicked into high gear. Then immediately, a sign of impending doom covers the earth. Here we have people dying all around, so could things get any worse? Yes, much worse. Seven angels pour out seven vials of the wrath of God in its full strength. The sun fails to shine, the moon quits reflecting the sun during night hours, stars are falling, and the powers of heaven and earth are shaken....what could shaken mean? Untold destruction, signs of impending doom and everyone, I mean everyone knows that something is about to happen and the dread grips them, until their hearts and circulatory systems collapse or maybe they go mad and crazy with fear. One can only speculate. People will mourn. It says that all the tribes of the earth will mourn. You will not mourn for something that gives you joy as we will at His appearing, but mourn because of spirit filled dread and loathing, so the church of God is not included in this analogy, as we prayed for His appearing, and it brought great joy, seven years earlier.

When Jesus comes to reign and rule and destroy all rebellion, will this time be sudden, without warning, without anyone noticing a difference in their environment? Would you notice? If you are witness to it, and I pray you are not, then you would definitely notice some type of world shaking event that is about to happen. Will men repent of their rebellion, what with all the disasters and environmental changes, not to

mention inescapable displays of divine wrath that can only come from a Higher Power? They must know that it's the God of Heaven doing this to them and to this world. Will they repent? God says they will not as found in the verses of Revelation. We see angels flying in the air proclaiming the Gospel to the nations left. Why are Angels proclaiming the Gospel at this time? Was that not the Church's job to preach unto the highways and the byways? Yes, but since the Church is NOT here, the job is left to an Angel to proclaim one last time that Gospel of Jesus Christ, as we are not on this earth...another sign of the rapture of the church. God gives them every possible chance to repent, but alas, they will not.

Then verse 31, He shall send His angels to gather all of the elect who have died for the witness of Jesus Christ. Who are these elect? During this time of Great Tribulation, there will be 144,000 evangelist from the 12 tribes of Israel. You will have two witnesses who are preaching nonstop for 3.5 years at the temple of God. Who will believe their message? The Nation of Israel will be their focus. People of the rest of the world have been fed a strong delusion, and they believe a lie. They have taken a mark of loyalty to the Beast's power and are spiritually doomed. The angels are gathering saints, fallen saints during this tribulation. They have died believing in their Messiah and have not denied Him, to the death. They are Israel, as God has purified them as silver is refined in the fire....He has washed them as with fuller soap....clean, white, and pure because of the blood of their Savior, our Savior.

Now Jesus backs up in time continuum and speaks a parable of a fig tree:

24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Earlier in Luke, Jesus blasted the Pharisees for not perceiving signs that were given them:

12:54 And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. Luke,

12:55 And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

12:56 Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

In their blindness, they had the prophecy of Jesus appearing, as He was right in front of them. They did not perceive or understand. Today we have the prophecy right in front of us, as they did. They did not perceive His coming to them as their Messiah. Will we understand and perceive His glorious appearing and gathering His church, in the twinkling of an eye?

A SURPRISE FOR THOSE IN DARKNESS

As I just mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, the time of His coming to rule and reign to put down all rebellion on earth, will not come as a surprise. All will know that impending doom is coming. It will be an unprecedented time and not a day like all others. Jesus speaks of an earlier time, when a fig tree is about to blossom and putting forth new leaves. When did that fig tree appear? Correct, in 1948, when Israel was made a nation again, after almost 2000 years. Unprecedented and amazing, not suppose to happen, but it did....divinely so. He says when these events start to happen, then know He is near...right at the door!

A generation will not pass till all things be fulfilled. What is a generation? The bible says a man has 70 years to live his life and 80 years by strength to live on this earth. Now I warn others, we can't make predictions about dates, or times, noting v. 36, but we can know the season....add 1948 plus 70-80 years....see what I mean, are we on the cusp of the fulfillment of this scripture?

24:37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

24:38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Jesus speaks of a day, that's like any other day. People are merrily going about their business. They continue their wickedness, not knowing anything is amiss, much like the people of Noah's day. UNTIL, the warning ends, and the event takes place. Life will change for everyone who misses the warning and continues in their wickedness. Much like Noah's Ark. This ship (Jesus Christ and Him crucified) of the Church of the Living God will leave port bound for glory, and the world will wander around as blind people wondering what happened.

24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

24:41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Notice the suddenness of the event, as described here which is synonymous with the parable about Noah and warning people of the Antediluvian period...some take this as a bad sign for the one removed, but I take it as to mean the elect being removed by force, without warning. Why do I say that? Because of the next few verses:

24:43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Jesus comes suddenly, without warning, much as a thief would break into your home. Another emphasis on the unforeseen. Did you know he was coming? No, that's why he's a thief. Jesus is not a thief, but the analogy fits as it describes the unforeseen, so you take precautions and that you are prepared for the suddenness of His coming.

24:45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?(preaching the Word in the time we have left) emphasis mine.

24:46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

24:47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

24:49 And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

24:50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

24:51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Then comes this last part. Ministers that read this, take note. Who is Jesus speaking of here? Is it the everyday Joe that the Lord has given rulership over His household? What is His house? The church and the people who make up that church. Sadly, many so called “ministers” that take the office of shepherd lightly and abuse the office of their calling. That is many in the main stream denominations today. I believe Jesus is making special mention of men and women who have been called to teach, to preach the Gospel, to counsel, and to minister to the children of God who make up His body. To neglect that duty and wander into sins of the flesh, be it stealing, lying, adultery, or any other sin that abuses the folks, then woe to that servant.

Sadly, these wolves in sheep clothing, or ministers that abuse their office, have the flock looking to them for leadership. They look for spiritual meat for life, as found in the Word of God. If a minister falls, and fails in his calling, is it only him that it takes down? No, it takes many people who looked to him for spiritual leadership and they fall away from following God. They sadly, put their stock in a man, as their example and failed to realize, that there is only One example, and that is the man/God, Jesus Christ. Is this minister responsible for the spiritual condition of His flock? To a point, yes he is. But in the same breath, each of us are responsible for our own salvation. It's just sad that this minister, or false prophet, since he failed, abused this office and the reward is severe. How severe? God is the judge, not me.

The signs of the end of the age are all around us. Jesus gave us the prophecy 2000 years ago, and it is being played out with pin point accuracy, in His day and in ours. Jesus is God and He knew when He spoke of these words to His disciples the path that this age we live in would take. The question is: Are you taking Him seriously? Do you read these words and scoff, or take warning? Have you been playing church, or wandering around in the dark and know not my Savior? You say you believe in Jesus Christ, but do you live like you know Him? People, the time is growing short. History is winding down to the end of the Church age, or the Age of Grace. Suddenly, the Words of Jesus will be all too real for anyone that turns a deaf ear to the warning. Will you survive what is coming? Will you even want to? Will you make your home with the angels or with the demons of hell? Will you dwell with God Almighty for all eternity, or be banished to outer darkness where this is weeping and gnashing of teeth?

Many places within the Bible speak of prophecy, as it is full of signs and wonders for the close of human existence on this planet. Will you be found in Him, by accepting His blood sacrifice on a cruel cross for your sins, and mine? Will you enjoy eternal bliss and glory in a world that no man can imagine? Or will you worship yourself and pay the penalty with everlasting punishment apart from God? I beseech you, that you present yourself as a living sacrifice to God and believe on the only name that is above every name, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, as the signs speak of the end of the age closing fast.

This is Pastor Mike Taylor, praying God's salvation in your life today. If there is anything I can counsel you on, pray with you about, or just listen with a sympathetic ear, email me at: realteam1999@sbcglobal.net, or visit me online at www.churchofgod-usa.org.

God bless you all, till we meet at Jesus feet.