

Prophetic Outline of the End Time- Matthew 24:1-31



1. Disciples' Three Questions

- a. Our attitude to biblical prophecy is important. Do we see biblical prophecy as an accurate prediction of the future? Or merely as a theological reflection?
- b. The 'Spine' of all biblical prophecy is in Matt 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. They provide three different camera angles to the key end-time events leading up to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c. The disciples' great pride in the magnificence of the temple was answered by Jesus' shocking prediction of its complete destruction. Astounded, the disciples asked Jesus three questions, assuming they were the same question (Mt 24:3).
 - i. When will these things be? i.e., the destruction of the temple.
 - ii. What will be the 'sign' of Your coming? (Gk. Parousia, the NT term for Christ's return, 'royal visit')
 - iii. And of the end of this age?

The signs of Christ's return (ii) and the end of this age (iii) will overlap in time. But the destruction of the temple (i) was to take place in 70AD. The disciples thought of them as one single event.

Jesus separated their questions into separate components and answered each one.

2. The Destruction of Jerusalem – Answer to Question (i)

- a. Jerusalem destroyed 70AD (Luke 21:12, 20-24)
 - i. Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in 70AD, ~40 years after the crucifixion of Christ. The destruction was followed by a temporary lift of the siege. (Vespasian initially laid the siege of Jerusalem to starve out the city, but he had to return to Rome to be coronated as Roman Emperor.)
 - ii. At least 1.5 million Jews were killed or carried off to 100+ nations. Christians who remembered and believed Jesus' prophecy fled to the east of Jordan and were saved (Pella, Eusebius H.E. iii.5.3).
- b. Then Jerusalem was restored to the Jews in 1948, 1967.
 - i. Till then the city was 'trampled' under Gentile rule, indicating it is out of divine order.
 - ii. The restoration of Jerusalem is a prelude to Christ's return. (Close link to v24 & v25-27)

3. General Trend of This Age (24:4-6)

- a. Warning against deception! Many false Christs throughout history. But no false Buddha or Mohammad!
- b. Troubles continue throughout this age (24:6). With the advancement of science wars will increase. But these in themselves do not constitute the sign of the end. *'See that you are not troubled.'*

4. Beginning of Birth Pangs (24:7-8) – [Signs in the world]

Jesus answers Questions (ii) and (iii) with the **keyword: 'THEN' 10 times.**

- a. This is the beginning of the 'signs of the end' (24:7). There is a break in Matt 24 between v6 and v7, the **1ST 'THEN'** (c.f. Luke 21:10)
- b. Ethnic conflicts and proliferation of political war. WW1 and WW2 saw the unnatural death of 17 million and 60 million people respectively. (Rev 6:3-6 predicts 1/4 of the earth will perish in WW3.) Shortly after WW2, the nation of Israel was birthed in 1948, then in 1967 Jerusalem came under Israel's control. Israel is always the critical prophetic time indicator.
- c. Rise of famine, (pestilences), earthquakes – God shakes the earth (Hag 2:6-9).
- d. 'Beginning of sorrows', Lit. the beginning of 'birth pangs'

- Birth pains sharply increase in both the frequency and intensity before delivery of the baby. Let's not forget that the baby (the kingdom of God) is on the way. *'Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.'* (Lk 21:28)
- Who is breaking the seals? The Lamb of God! (Rev 6:1) As Jesus breaks the seals, birth pains are triggered in the world.
- There are 18 global end-time trends (Mike Bickle) – false Christs, national & international warfare, rumours of war, ethnic conflict, economic warfare, famines, pestilences, great earthquakes, troubles, commotions, fearful sights, great heavenly signs, anti-Semitism, Christian persecution, the supernatural proclamation of the gospel, relational betrayal, martyrdom, and increased maturity. (C.f. Mk 13:5-8; Lk 21:7-18)

5. Intermediate Birth Pangs (24:9-14) - [Signs in the Church]

- a. **2ND 'THEN'** - Worldwide persecution of the believers. This trend is increasing.
- b. **3RD 'THEN'** - Great falling away from the church because of offence and betrayal amongst God's people under pressure. How is the church pressured?
- c. **4TH 'THEN'** - Rise of false prophets and increase of 'lawlessness' in the church, leading to the cooling of our first love, lit. agape. (C.f. 1 Tim 4:1) Thus there is a strong warning against falling away. (C.f. Heb 6:4; 2 Pet 2:1ff)

Persecution, betrayal and deception are the three specific dangers for the church in the last days. What is behind this? The 'counterfeit world religion' or the 'harlot Babylon religion' promising peace - false peace.

- The rise of false prophets and an increase of lawlessness leading to deception and compromise. Antichrist is the man of 'lawlessness' (Matt 7:21-23, c.f. 2 Thess 2:3). We need to cultivate 'unoffendable' hearts.
 - The pressure from without (persecution) and pressure from within (betrayal) will test the church and our hearts on the issue of 'love' and 'truth'.
 - *'He who endures to the end shall be saved.'* (24:13) We must not take our salvation for granted, but guard our heart with diligence against fear and deception.
- d. **5TH 'THEN' - THE SIGN OF THE END!** The gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed to all nations (c.f. 2 Pet 3:11-12). The gospel will be preached in great power resulting in the greatest harvest of souls before Jesus' return (Rev 14:14-16). Jesus said, *'The harvest is the end of the age.'* (Matt 13:39) It is the gospel of the kingdom, but not just of salvation. Why was Jesus crucified? Why were the apostles persecuted? (c.f. Acts 17:6-7) They preached Jesus is KING!

6. Final Birth Pangs (24:15-28) - [Signs in Israel and the Sky]

- a. **6TH 'THEN'** - The focus shifts to Jerusalem and Judea (24:15-20) with reference to Daniel's prophecy about the antichrist (c.f. Dan 11:21ff. c.f. Rom 11:25-27). His desecration of the holy place, i.e., the temple, is referred to as the 'abomination of desolation' (Lt. Gk 'desolating sacrilege', Antiochus Epiphanes, 167BC).

'When they say, 'Peace, and safety!' then sudden destruction [Great Tribulation] comes upon them, as labour pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.' (1 Thess 5:2)

'And in his place shall arise a vile person [Antichrist]... he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue...And after the league [agreement] is made with him he shall act deceitfully ... his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant; so he shall do damage...shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation...he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods...' (Dan 11:21-36)

'He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.' (C.f. Rev 13:14)

Jesus gives the most urgent warning to those in Jerusalem to waste no time, but immediately flee to the mountains. (c.f. Remember the destruction of Jerusalem 70AD?) The description of Israel's house tops and their Sabbath rules are accurate! It is our responsibility to pray for the timing of flight for those who are in Jerusalem – not in winter or on the Sabbath – so their flight will be easier. Our prayer must be in line with the Scripture.

- b. **7TH 'THEN'** - This is the start of the Great Tribulation, or 'Jacob's Trouble'. (C.f. Jer 30:1-3; Rom 2:9-10 principle, Rev 7:9-14) It is a short time (Rev 12:12; 17:10). This is when man's sin and evil reach their fullness (Dan 8:23ff).
 - i. 3 ½ years: 'a time and times and half a time' (Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 12:14)
 - ii. 42 months (Rev 11:2; 13:5)
 - iii. 1260 days (Rev 11:3; 12:6)
- c. **8TH 'THEN'** - The final warning against deception (24:23-28). In difficult times, there is a great human longing for a deliverer. So, the concept of the Messiah will be very popular. Ultimately the antichrist will declare he is the Messiah. Note signs and wonders do not guarantee the messenger is from God. Christ's will come like the lightning. Carcass and vultures here may refer to the dying human civilisation? (Eagles do not eat dead animals.)
- d. **9TH 'THEN'** - Signs in the heavens and constellations! (24:29-30, c.f. Is. 24:19-20)
- e. **10TH 'THEN'** – The coming of the Lord! (Heb 12:26-28; Rev 19:11-16) **This answers Question (ii).**

There will be eyewitnesses of the Lord's return, and the response of the nations. Note the angels will gather the elect in the rapture. (1 Thess 4:16-17) So the right response of the believers in those days is to look up! (Luke 21:28)

7. Daniel's 30-days Prophecy

Why is the abomination of desolation is set up for 1,290 days? (Dan 12:11)

When for 1,260 days :-

- i. the two witnesses will be prophesying (Rev 11:3)?
- ii. God's people will receive supernatural protection and provision (Rev 12:6)?
- iii. saints endure persecution (Rev 13:5-7)?

The antichrist will have the abomination of desolation for extra 30 days. In other words, the saints stop prophesying, receive provision, and endure persecution at the end of 1,260 days.

Why?

Because they are caught up in the rapture to meet the Lord in the air at the end of 1,260 days.

Overview of KEY END TIME EVENTS

REVELATION STUDY

