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Text: Matthew 24:15-28
Title: The Great Tribulation!

Intro: Matthew 24 is known as a prophetic discourse. In Matthew 24:3, the disciples asked Jesus questions concerning signs of His coming and of the end of the age. Thus, Jesus shared with them what will happen pre-Tribulation, what will happen during the Tribulation, what will happen to all who accept Him during the Tribulation, and what will happen after Tribulation. Last week we glanced at some signs of the end of the age.

Jesus said there will be wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, and famines. But Jesus did say that these are the “beginning of sorrows” and “the end is not yet.” Now the “sorrows” in the original language means “birth pangs”, the pain in childbirth. Birth pangs speak of frequency and intensity. As a woman nears birth, the “pangs” become more frequent and intense. This is true also for the signs of the end of the age. Wars, earthquakes, famines happened before and after Jesus’ day, but the end was not yet, because this was only the beginning of sorrows. Throughout history we have seen the pangs become more frequent and intense. The pangs are so frequent and intense that we must be right at the time of delivery when Jesus is to return.

The signs of the end of the age are heavy persecution, rise of false christs, rise of false prophets, universal preaching of the Gospel, the abomination of desolation.

Verse 15 says, ***“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place.”*** This is a cryptogram to be solved and Jesus tells the disciples the book to turn to. Jesus referenced Daniel who mentioned the abomination of desolation in Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11.

Daniel 9:27 ***Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week, He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”***

Daniel 11:31 ***And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.***

Daniel 12:11 ***And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.***

Abomination is something that causes disgust or hatred; and desolation is a state of complete emptiness or destruction. The abomination of desolation is the setting up of an image of a pagan god inside the sanctuary, followed by the sacrifice of some kind of animal considered unclean.

Daniel prophesy of one who would come and make a covenant with the people of Israel. The terms of the covenant will be for seven years (weeks). After the first 3 ½ years the ruler will gather his troops and put an end of the sacrifices and offerings in the temple. At that time the

ruler will desecrate the temple by setting up some type of sacrilegious object. In the last 3 ½ years, the desecration of the temple will continue until the judgment of God is inflicted on the ruler and his followers.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 ***He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.***

When the abomination of desolation occurs, those in Judea should flee to the mountains. Verses 16-20 stress the urgency and the suffering that there will be.

- A. The concern of people in Judea during the Great Tribulation will not be their personal possessions (what they have in their homes)—verse 17
- B. The concern of people in Judea during the Great Tribulation will not be their clothing (what they will wear)—verse 18
- C. The Great Tribulation will be very tough and challenging for pregnant and nursing mothers. It is difficult for pregnant and nursing mothers to flee—verse 19

Luke 23:29 ***Behold, the days are coming when they will say, Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!***

Great Tribulation verses 21-22 ***For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.***

The Great Tribulation is a period of suffering sent from God upon the earth to accomplish His purpose. God's basic purpose of Tribulation is that it be a time of judgment. Judgment will put down the rebellion of mankind in preparation of Christ's reign. According to Thomas Ice, "One of the major Divine purposes for the tribulation in relation to Israel is the conversion of the Jewish remnant to faith in Jesus as their Messiah. This will take place throughout the tribulation, but by the end of the seven-year period the entire number of the elect remnant will become converted to Jesus." (God's Purpose for Israel During the Tribulation, 2009).

The Great Tribulation will purge out rebels from the elect. Ezekiel 20:33–38 say, ***“As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. And I shall bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; and I shall bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I shall enter into judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, declares the Lord GOD. And I shall make you pass under the rod, and I shall bring you into the bond of the covenant; and I shall purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me.”***

During the Great Tribulation the nation of Israel will know Jesus Christ as LORD. Ezekiel 22:

The Great Tribulation will chasten the nation of Israel. Jeremiah 30:22 says, ***“Only I will not destroy you completely. But I will chasten you justly and will by no means leave you unpunished.”*** This chastisement will result in Israel’s conversion: ***“And you shall be My people, And I will be your God”*** (Jer. 30:22). Jeremiah says that these things will occur ***“in the latter days”*** (Jer. 30:24).

The Great Tribulation is a period of suffering unlike any other period in the past or future.

Time will be shortened for the sake of the elect. The elect mentioned in verse 22 refers to those who will be redeemed in the Tribulation. The elect of the Church age will be raptured before the Tribulation. The Church will not come under God’s wrath. 1 Thessalonians 5:9 ***For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

Revelation 3:10 ***Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.***

Deception by false christs, false prophets verse 23-26.

Verse 24 reiterate verse 5

The false christs will not come in the name Jesus or claim to be followers of Jesus saying they are sent by Him. They will come claiming themselves to be the Messiah. Messiah means promised deliverer. There are people today who claim to be the Christ, the promised deliverer. The purpose for declaring themselves the Christ (promised deliverer) is to lead people astray. Jesus said to the disciples, “See that no one leads you astray.” 2 Timothy 3:6-9 ***For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.***

The Great Tribulation will be a time of increased deception. Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:13, ***“Evil men and impostures go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”***

In times of stress and suffering there are always counterfeit deliverers. They will be preaching messages and performing miracles to deceive. A word of warning for those who will experience Tribulation, do not be deceived by the messages and miracles of false christs and false prophets.

The condition necessary for the return of Christ. The Bible teaches that before Christ can return to earth for His millennial kingdom the nation of Israel must be converted to Jesus as their Messiah and call on Him to save them (Lev. 26:40–42; Jer. 3:11–18; Hosea 5:15; Zech. 12:10; Matt. 23:37–39; Acts 3:19–21).

The return of Christ is a rescue event. Jesus will return to planet earth in order to rescue the believing Jewish remnant.