

# Ministry of Grace Church

## Matthew 24

### Preface:

In the previous chapter we saw Jesus confronting the Scribes and Pharisees. He even went so far as to pronounce seven woes on them because of their hypocrisy. In this chapter, He will answer the disciples' questions about the end of the age and His coming again to set up the kingdom.

Before we go any further, though, let's take note of something here. This entire chapter of Matthew as well as the parallel passages in Mark and Luke are focused on the Jews. (Slide 2-A) Some of this section deals with the tribulation, which is also known as Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. Daniel's prophecies were addressed to Jews. He makes constant reference to "Your people who are called by Your name" which is a reference to Jews. In these passages, in fact the entire tribulation period, God is dealing with Jews, not Christians. We, Christians will not be here during the Tribulation!

### Temple Destruction Foretold

#### **Matthew 24:1-2**

**<sup>1</sup>Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. <sup>2</sup>But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."**

**Mark 13:1-2** – <sup>1</sup>And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" <sup>2</sup>And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

**Luke 21:5-6** – <sup>5</sup>And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, <sup>6</sup>"As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

### Notes:

Let's talk about the Jewish Temple for a minute. The original temple was built by King David's son Solomon around 950 B.C. and was destroyed in 587 B.C. when Babylon conquered the Israelites and carried them away captive. 50 years later, in 537 B.C., the Persian King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return and rebuild the temple. This temple (the second temple or Zerubbabel's temple) was slightly smaller than Solomon's temple, and was much less ornately decorated. Those who had seen the original temple were disappointed because of the smaller size and lack of splendor of the rebuilt temple. (Ezra 3:12, 13) When Herod the Great came to power, he implemented many massive building projects, including the refinishing of the temple and the temple grounds. (Slide 2-B) In about 20 B.C., he had the courtyard nearly doubled, adding retaining walls to keep it all level. He also raised and enlarged the temple itself, renovating it, and facing it with white stones and adorning it with large amounts of gold overlay. It became known as Herod's temple. The renovation was not completed until about A.D. 64, only 6 years before Rome destroyed it completely. It was this magnificent temple that Jesus and His disciples looked at and talked about. Now, back to our story.

After severely denouncing the Pharisees and Scribes for their hypocrisy, Jesus and His disciples headed across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives. As they were going, His disciples looked back and commented on the

magnificence of the temple. (Slide 3) Jesus then informed them that despite the grandeur of the temple and the fact that it had been under construction for 50 years and was still not complete, it would be completely thrown down. In fact, Jesus said, “there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” When the Romans conquered the Israelites, they burned and completely destroyed the temple. The magnificent gold overlay on the upper portion of the temple melted as the temple was burned. After it was burned, Roman soldiers gathered up every building stone that had traces of gold on it, thus fulfilling Jesus’ prophecy.



## Signs of the End of the Age (1<sup>st</sup> half of the Tribulation)

### **Matthew 24:3-9**

<sup>3</sup>As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" <sup>4</sup>And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. <sup>5</sup>For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. <sup>6</sup>And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup>For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup>All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. <sup>9</sup>"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

**Mark 13:3-9** – <sup>3</sup>And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup>"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" <sup>5</sup>And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one leads you astray. <sup>6</sup>Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. <sup>7</sup>And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. <sup>8</sup>For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains. <sup>9</sup>"But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and

you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them.

**Luke 21:7-10** – <sup>7</sup>And they asked him, "Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?" <sup>8</sup>And he said, "See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is at hand!' Do not go after them. <sup>9</sup>And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once." <sup>10</sup>Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

### Notes:

Part of the difficulty in interpreting prophetic messages is the fact that the prophet may see several historic fulfillments of his message and relate them all at the same time. They will often be pronounced out of order. It is like viewing mountains off in the distance where those that are farther away will be more prominent than those that are closer. Another metaphor of this is an artist who makes a painting of a room with a window looking out into a garden with a sunset off in the distance where the appearance of the garden or the sunset may be the thing most focused on.

According to Mark's gospel account, it was Peter, Andrew, James, and John who asked Jesus these questions. Although it looks like three questions, there are only two being asked here. They are: "when will these things be?" (Slide 4) and "what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" Jesus had just told them that the temple will be completely destroyed and the first question was, when will this happen? This question is not answered in Matthew's gospel account. It is answered in **Luke 21:20** (But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.)

Historically, this is exactly what happened when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The Romans originally conquered the Israelites in 63 B.C. and set up a local king (Herod the Great). In A.D. 66, the Israelites rebelled and expelled the Romans out of Jerusalem. However, the Romans quickly retaliated and surrounded the city. During the Passover of A.D. 70, the Romans allowed pilgrims to enter the city but not to leave. This effectively starved out the Israelites. The Romans then breached the wall of the city and defeated them. They then burned the temple and tore it down completely. The only portion of the temple that remained was part of the western retaining wall, which today is referred to as the "wailing wall."

As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. (Matthew 24:3-9)

This section of Matthew describes the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the Tribulation. (Slide 5-A) If we compare this section of Jesus' message with the first six seals of the sixth chapter of Revelation we notice some strong similarities. The first seal represents a strong leader (some think this is a representation of the Antichrist) who conquers without violence, apparently promising peace. The second seal represents warfare (wars and rumors of wars). The third seal represents famine (famines and earthquakes in various places) The fifth seal represents those who are martyred for their faith (they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death). All of the seal judgments occur during the first half of the tribulation.

## Signs of the End of the Age (2nd half of the Tribulation)

### **Matthew 24:10-14**

<sup>10</sup>And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. <sup>11</sup>And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. <sup>12</sup>And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup>But the one who endures to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup>And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

**Mark 13:10-13** – <sup>10</sup>And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. <sup>11</sup>And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. <sup>12</sup>And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. <sup>13</sup>And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

**Luke 21:11-24** – <sup>11</sup>There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. <sup>12</sup>But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. <sup>13</sup>This will be your opportunity to bear witness. <sup>14</sup>Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, <sup>15</sup>for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. <sup>16</sup>You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. <sup>17</sup>You will be hated by all for my name's sake. <sup>18</sup>But not a hair of your head will perish. <sup>19</sup>By your endurance you will gain your lives.

<sup>20</sup>But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. <sup>21</sup>Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, <sup>22</sup>for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. <sup>23</sup>Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. <sup>24</sup>They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

### Notes:

At the middle of the tribulation there is war in heaven between Satan (with his angels) and the Archangel Michael (with the good angels). This is spoken of in **Revelation 12:7-14**. At the conclusion of this war, Satan and all his fallen angels will be kicked out of heaven and banished to the earth. (Slide 5-B) Since Satan has been persecuting the Jews from the time of Abraham, this persecution will intensify during the second half of the tribulation after Satan and his angels have been banished to the earth. As a result:

<sup>10</sup>And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. <sup>11</sup>And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. <sup>12</sup>And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. (Matthew 24:10-12)

This is a reference to what will happen during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the Tribulation. (Slide 5-C) The next two verses are often misinterpreted in an attempt to support an incorrect theology. Verse 13 says: **But the one who endures to the end will be saved**. This is not a reference to salvation by faith. Some commentators say that this is a reference to the church during the Tribulation. However, as I said before, the Tribulation (Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week) is a time when God is dealing with Israel, not the church. We (the church) will not be around. We will be up in heaven watching. Verse 13 is a reference to those who survive the Tribulation and their salvation refers to their entry into the Millennial Kingdom.

Verse 14 has often been used as a call to world evangelism and an attempt to prove that the church will be around during the Tribulation. However, our Great Commission is different. We are told to,

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. ... (Matthew 28:19-20)

That is not what Matthew 24:14 is referring to. Notice that Matthew refers to the “gospel of the kingdom.” (Slide 6-A) We do not preach the gospel of the kingdom; we preach the gospel of salvation by grace through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. If you recall, the gospel of the kingdom is what Jesus preached (Matthew 4:23 and Matthew 9:35). Both He and John the Baptist proclaimed, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Also, notice that when Jesus sent out His disciples, He told them to: “... proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'” This gospel of the kingdom is what the 144,000 witnesses will be proclaiming throughout the second half of the Tribulation.

## **The Abomination of Desolation** (middle of the Tribulation and 2<sup>nd</sup> half)

### **Matthew 24:15-28**

<sup>15</sup>"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), <sup>16</sup>then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup>Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, <sup>18</sup>and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. <sup>19</sup>And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! <sup>20</sup>Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. <sup>21</sup>For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. <sup>22</sup>And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. <sup>23</sup>Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. <sup>24</sup>For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. <sup>25</sup>See, I have told you beforehand. <sup>26</sup>So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. <sup>27</sup>For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup>Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

**Mark 13:14-23** – <sup>14</sup>"But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>15</sup>Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, <sup>16</sup>and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. <sup>17</sup>And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! <sup>18</sup>Pray that it may not happen in winter. <sup>19</sup>For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. <sup>20</sup>And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days. <sup>21</sup>And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. <sup>22</sup>For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. <sup>23</sup>But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand.

### **Notes:**

Just as with other prophets do with their prophetic messages, Jesus now goes backward chronologically. In this case he goes back to the middle of the Tribulation. The abomination of desolation that is mentioned here is also talked about in Daniel 9:27, Daniel 12:11, and 2 Thessalonians 2:3,4. These are all references to the event in which the antichrist sets himself up in the temple as god and the false prophet creates an image of the beast (the antichrist), sets it up in the temple, and makes it come to life. This will be a sign for Jews at that time to “Get out of town – fast!” This is the point at which Satan will pursue anyone who believes in Yahweh. Satan will be furious because he has been cast to the earth and he will be looking for revenge.

This is a different event than what is talked about in Luke’s gospel account:

<sup>20</sup>"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. <sup>21</sup>Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, <sup>22</sup>for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. <sup>23</sup>Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. <sup>24</sup>They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (Luke 21:20-24)

This is one of those examples where two passages of Scripture sound similar but are definitely different events. Luke's account is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D.70. Matthew's account is referring to the beast (the antichrist), in the middle of the Tribulation, sitting in the temple and proclaiming himself to be god. Notice in Luke's account that it is when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies. In Matthew's description it is

"the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place."

Also notice that Luke says that Jews will

"fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

When the Abomination of Desolation occurs, the Jews will not be led captive among all nations (which they were when Rome destroyed Jerusalem). Instead, Jews will simply be murdered.

**Matthew 24:21** tells us that as soon as the Abomination of Desolation occurs,

... there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.

Because of this verse, we refer to the second half of the tribulation as "The Great Tribulation." It will last for 3 ½ years. Then, at the end of this 3 ½ years, Matthew tells us:

For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

This is a description of the second coming of Jesus. It indicates that everyone will see Him coming. John described it this way in the book of Revelation:

Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. (**Revelation 1:7**)

Finally, Matthew tells us:

Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

When Jesus comes back He will face His enemies at the battle of Armageddon in which He will slaughter every single person in the armies that have come to fight Him. They will be killed by the words that come out of Jesus' mouth. Their bodies will be a feast for the vultures.

Let's talk briefly about another cryptic verse here and what it might mean. It is:

And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. (Matthew 24:22)

The 4<sup>th</sup> trumpet judgment is described in Revelation chapter 8. It says:

The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night. (Revelation 8:12)

What does it mean when it says, “a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night”? It sounds like the rotation of the earth has been sped up and the days will be 18 hours long instead of 24. This sounds like the days had been cut short, doesn't it?

## **The Coming of the Son of Man** (end of the Tribulation)

### **Matthew 24:29-31**

<sup>29</sup>“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup>Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup>And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

**Mark 13:24-27** – <sup>24</sup>“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, <sup>25</sup>and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>26</sup>And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup>And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

**Luke 21:25-28** – <sup>25</sup>“And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, <sup>26</sup>people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup>And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup>Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

### **Notes:**

Jesus' focus now turns to the end of the Tribulation when He will return to earth to set-up the Messianic Kingdom (the Millennium). If you look at the diagram of the Tribulation (Timeline of Revelation) you will notice that the seven bowls (vials) have just been poured out in rapid succession. The 5<sup>th</sup> bowl plunges the entire kingdom of the beast (the whole world) into darkness and the 6<sup>th</sup> bowl dries up the Euphrates River so that the armies from the east can make their way to Israel for the final battle. At this point all the armies of the earth (the permanent earth dwellers) converge on Israel (in the darkness) for what is known as The Battle of Armageddon. This battle (actually, a slaughter) occurs between the sixth and seventh bowls.

Matthew now gives us some additional information regarding what will happen when Christ returns. The sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light (a description of the 5<sup>th</sup> bowl judgment?) (Slide 6-B) and there will be numerous shooting stars. With this darkness and spectacular heavenly light show, the whole world will see “the sign of the Son of Man.” We are never told what this sign will be, but it will be immediately followed by the return of Jesus Christ “with power and great glory.” With the entire world in darkness, the glory of our God and Savior will appear even more spectacular as He comes to earth. He will be riding a white horse and will be followed by “the armies of heaven” riding on white horses. They will all be dressed in white garments. Imagine how spectacular this sight will be, or at least it would be for us. The permanent earth dwellers (all the tribes of earth), on the other hand, will mourn when they see Him. The word translated “mourn” means to wail and lament. They will suddenly realize (too late) that God is real and He is coming to destroy them.

Then – with the seventh bowl there is a “great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth” (Revelation 16:18). One of the results of this massive earthquake is:

And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe. (Revelation 16:20-21)

This earthquake will completely remake the geography of the earth (no more islands and no mountains).

As Jesus is returning to the earth, Matthew tells us, “he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” The “elect” here are those who have remained true to God throughout the Tribulation. This is in preparation for the Sheep and Goat Judgment.

Whew!

## **The Lesson of the Fig Tree**

### **Matthew 24:32-35**

<sup>32</sup>“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>33</sup>So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>34</sup>Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>35</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

**Mark 13:28-31** – <sup>28</sup>“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>30</sup>Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>31</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

**Luke 21:29-33** – <sup>29</sup>And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. <sup>30</sup>As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. <sup>31</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup>Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. <sup>33</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

### **Notes:**

Jesus now teaches the disciples the lesson of the fig tree. Throughout the Bible the fig tree is used as a symbol of the Jewish people. This is another indication that the signs of the end of the age that Jesus has just talked about are in relation to the Israelites. What are these signs?

- Many will come claiming to be Christ
- You (Jews) will hear of wars and rumors of wars (nation against nation)
- Jews will be persecuted and martyred
- Gospel of the Kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the earth
- The Abomination of Desolation
- Sun darkened & moon will not shine

Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

The word translated “generation” is *genea*, which is derived from the verb *ginomai*, meaning “to begin to be.” Originally this word meant a generation, that is, the lifespan of a group of contemporaries. However, in New Testament Greek it is frequently used to refer to those who are of a common ancestry, that is, a race of people. Therefore, this is not saying that these things will take place within one generation of when the signs are seen. This verse is saying that this people, the Israelites, will not pass away until the end of this age. One of the



unique things about the Jewish people is that in spite of having been defeated and scattered across the globe, they never lost their sense of identity as a people. They have never ceased to be God's people. And – this is one more indication that during the Tribulation period, God is dealing with the Israelites.

## **No One Knows That Day and Hour**

### **Matthew 24:36-51**

<sup>36</sup>"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. <sup>37</sup>For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup>For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup>and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>40</sup>Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. <sup>41</sup>Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. <sup>42</sup>Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup>But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup>Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. <sup>45</sup>"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? <sup>46</sup>Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. <sup>47</sup>Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. <sup>48</sup>But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' <sup>49</sup>and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, <sup>50</sup>the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know <sup>51</sup>and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

**Mark 13:32-37** – <sup>32</sup>"But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup>Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup>It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. <sup>35</sup>Therefore stay awake--for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning-- <sup>36</sup>lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. <sup>37</sup>And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake."

**Luke 12:35-48** – <sup>35</sup>"Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, <sup>36</sup>and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. <sup>37</sup>Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. <sup>38</sup>If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! <sup>39</sup>But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. <sup>40</sup>You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." <sup>41</sup>Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?" <sup>42</sup>And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? <sup>43</sup>Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. <sup>44</sup>Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. <sup>45</sup>But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, <sup>46</sup>the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful. <sup>47</sup>And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. <sup>48</sup>But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

## **Notes:**

After telling His disciples what the signs will be when He is coming back to set-up His kingdom (**Matthew 24:30**), Jesus tells them that the precise day and hour of His return is not known by anyone except God the Father. (**Slide 6-C**) He told His disciples that the angels don't know the day or hour and even the Son of God (the humanity of Jesus) doesn't know. What He does tell them is that it will come unexpectedly, just as the flood did in the days of Noah. In spite of Noah's constant preaching and even his completion of the ark, the people were too busy living in the "here and now" to be concerned with the "hereafter." In the same way, even though there will be cataclysmic events happening on earth, people will still be too busy in their daily lives (probably, just trying to stay alive) to be aware of what is about to happen.

Jesus then made another one of those often misunderstood statements. The reason it is so often misunderstood is because people read through this section too fast and try to interpret it based on what they want it to mean, rather than what it actually says. Jesus said:

Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. (**Matthew 24:40-41**)

Now, let me say this right up front. This is NOT talking about the rapture. Remember what Jesus just said about Noah and the flood? He said that "they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away." The ones who were swept away were the ones who were judged and condemned. Noah and his family were saved. When Jesus said "two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left," he was indicating that just like in the time of Noah, the one who will be taken away will be judged and condemned. The one who is left will be saved and ushered into the Millennium.

Jesus' admonition then is, "Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." In other words, since the day and hour are unknown, don't give up hope and don't abandon your faith in God. In chapter 25, Matthew will tell us about the Sheep and Goat Judgment in which the faithful will be ushered into the Millennium, but those who have received the mark of the Beast will be condemned. Those who have refused the mark of the Beast will be eagerly awaiting the coming of our Lord and they will be rewarded for being faithful.

## **So What?**

As we have noted several times now, this chapter is all about God's dealings with the Israelites in the end times. So, what does this have to do with Christians? Why do we even care? We won't be around and it appears that we will be able to watch from our heavenly vantage point. During the seven year Tribulation, God will be pouring out His vengeance on those who don't believe in Him and He will be preparing His faithful followers to enter into the Millennium. So what?

Jesus warned His disciples and all Jews to stay the course and don't get wrapped-up in the world system. That's the same message that He gives to the church today. He is coming soon, really soon. When He comes, will you still be focused on Him and how you can serve Him? Or, will he find you too busy living your life and not looking for Him.

There are some who teach that only those who are actively looking for Him will be taken in the rapture. They base this on a single verse:

so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. (**Hebrews 9:28**)

However, they never quite determine what it means to be "eagerly waiting for him." The problem with this is what Paul teaches us in 1 Corinthians:

Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed**, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

Also, if only some Christians are taken in the Rapture, what happens to the rest? The Tribulation? That can't be, because during the Tribulation God is dealing with the Jews, not Christians!

Matthew ended chapter 24 with a message from Jesus that basically says, "Be ready, be alert, remain faithful, and don't get so wrapped up in "living in the moment" that you sacrifice the quality of your "eternal life."

### **Now What?**

Does this change the way you think about how you are living your life? It should! If you're not living every day like a child of the King, you're not really living!

**Let's pray.**

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