

Session 6- Matthew 24:3-8- Beginning of Sorrows Part 2

I. REVIEW

- A. It is important to see the Biblical prophetic end-time storyline as a love story between Jesus and His Bride. We do not just want to memorize timelines or events, we want to go deep into understanding God and why He is doing what He is doing, His heart behind His actions.
- B. We are teaching from the perspective that all end-time prophecies are to be taken literally unless otherwise indicated and that they are describing future events.
 - 1. Bible prophecies are meant to be taken literally unless there is clear symbolism.
 - 2. We can know if prophecies have been partially or completely fulfilled by looking at history and doing in-depth Bible study.
- C. There are three major time frames to get Biblical insight into that occur within one generation that lead up to Jesus returning as King on the earth. These time frames can be seen by comparing Matthew 24 with 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 and Daniel 9:27.
 - 1. **Beginning of Sorrows** (Matthew 24:8) - “Beginning of Birth Pangs”- leading up to the final 7 years
 - 2. 7 Year Tribulation broken up into two time frames (see Daniel 9:27, “1 week” = 7 years).
 - a) **First 3 ½ Years of tribulation**- characterized by false “Peace and Safety” and the consistent increasing of the labor/birth pangs (Matthew 24:9-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4, Revelation 17)
 - b) **Last 3 ½ Years called the Great Tribulation**- (Matthew 24:15-29, Revelation 11:3, 12:6, 14, 13:5).

II. BEGINNING OF SORROWS

“3 Now 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 end of the age?” 4 And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.”

- A. Matthew 24-25 is Jesus’ most complete teaching on the end times. Jesus answers the disciples questions about what are the signs of His coming and of the end of the age. He describes about 9 signs in Matthew 24:1-7, Luke 21 and Mark 13 that will occur before the Tribulation even begins, and He calls these “the beginning of sorrows” and tells them to not be troubled; “for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet” (Mt 24:6).

- B. The term “beginning of sorrows” refers to a pregnancy analogy. The word sorrow in Hebrew literally means “*the pain of childbirth, travail pain, birth pangs.*” These birth pangs describe the increase of turmoil that will occur as sin increases in society. Because of earthquakes, famines, and pestilences chaos will increase greatly.
- C. Most of the positive and negative signs that will come in fullness at the time of Jesus’ return are already occurring now and will continue to increase and get closer together until He comes, just as labor pains do on a pregnant woman. Because these signs are already literally occurring, we can be alerted when we see these signs increasingly occurring on a global scale. We can resist the negative signs by praying against them and praying for mercy for those affected by them.

III. MATTHEW 24:3-8

- A. **Sign #1- Deception-** the warning of many being deceived because of the rise of false christs and false prophets

Matthew 24:4-5-“And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.”

1. Jesus and the apostles warned more about deception than anything else related to the end times (*Mt. 24:4-5, 11, 24; Mark 13:5-6; Luke 21:8; Matthew 7:15; 2 Thess 2:3,7, 9-10; 2 Timothy 4:3-4; 1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Peter 2*). The increase of false prophets and christ’s is a sign that Jesus’ return is near. There is already now a growing presence of deception that is a sign of the times we are living in.
2. “*Take heed*” or “*watch out for yourselves*”- to look, to behold, beware, to perceive, regard, to see, to discern, to observe, to examine and weigh carefully. It is our personal responsibility to take heed to ourselves so that we are personally not deceived. How do we take heed?
3. Verses about taking heed: Mark 4:24, Mark 8:15 (beware of the leaven of the Pharisees), Mark 12:38, Luke 8:18, **Mark 13:5, 9, 23, 33; Luke 21:8, 30.**
 - a) Mark 13:5- “Take heed that no one deceives you... do not be troubled”
 - b) Mark 13:9- “But watch out for yourselves...”
 - c) Mark 13:23- “But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.”
 - d) Mark 13:33- “Take heed, watch and pray...”
 - e) Luke 8:18- “Therefore take heed how you hear.”
 - f) Luke 21:8- “And He said: “Take heed that you not be deceived.”
 - g) Luke 21:30- “When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near.”

- h) Jesus' exhortation over and over is to take heed- a definition of taking heed is to actively cultivate a healthy fear of God in the midst of working through your negative responses. Allow yourself to have honest conversation with God because conversation with God is an open door into the knowledge of God and His heart. He has been wanting to confront that fear, so why not now?
- i) Habakkuk's response: (3:16) ***"When I heard, my body trembled; My lips quivered at the voice; Rottiness entered my bones; And I trembled in myself, That I might rest in the day of trouble."***

Matthew 24:11, 23-26- "11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it."

- 4. In Matthew 24:11 and 24, Jesus calls the deceivers "false christs and false prophets." Many people will see themselves as commissioned by God, claiming to be anointed (or others testifying that they are anointed) to bring change to their nation and to deliver people from oppression. "False prophets" will promise peace and prosperity in a time of judgment. This doesn't mean they will always call themselves Jesus, but could also be social reformers or deliverers, political and military leaders, even warlords and cult leaders. And "many" will follow them and be deceived by them.
- 5. Another name for those who bring deception are **social messengers** who seek to bring about a solution to society's problems, yet their answers are devoid of Christ, devoid of Biblical truth, and filled with false ideas and concepts. They will have an appealing narrative that will help bring unity to racial strife or bring truth to the agriculture/societal problems or unjust wars occurring between nations, etc.
- 6. These social justice messengers will turn eyes away from the truth of the divinity of Christ. They will make humanity's principles of right and wrong the foundation of justice instead of the Biblical right standards of Jesus (which produces self reliance, pride, false confidence in their ability to establish justice on the earth). Justice without Jesus isn't justice. Allegiance to Jesus and loving the truth are primary issues in the end times (2 Thes. 2:10).

2 Thess 2:9-10 "The coming of the lawless one [Antichrist] is...with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and unrighteous deception...because they did not receive the love of the truth."

- 7. Current and future social reformers focus on changing society and establishing social justice and peace without giving attention to taking responsibility to individual sin. (Personal depravity is always the cause of social sin, and Jesus is the only answer to personal depravity.)

8. What is happening in this “beginning of sorrows” time frame that sets up the globe for the 7 year Tribulation time frame? Crisis!!! Earthly and social crisis’ will create a global context for strong leaders (false prophets and teachers) to rise up with solutions. It is in a heightened context of injustice and social unrest that social reformers will rise upon the scene who have the answers that brings help/aid, and “justice” to the poor and oppressed. All this will be heightened as they will walk in demonic deception. This context is a perfect setup for the Antichrist to come on the scene, one man demonically anointed with solutions to rule the world in unity, and he will come forth subtly yet powerfully.

Matthew 7:15 *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”*

2 Timothy 4:3-4 *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”*

1 Tim. 4:1-3 *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from foods which God created...”*

2 Peter 2:1-2 (the whole chapter is about false prophets and teachers and is worth reading) *“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.”*

Jer. 23:16-22 *“Do not listen to the words of the prophets...they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the LORD. They continually say to those who despise Me, “The LORD has said, ‘You shall have peace’ and...they say, ‘No evil shall come upon you.’”... I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they would have turned them from their evil way...”*

Ezek. 13:10 *“They have seduced My people, saying, ‘Peace!’ when there is no peace...”*

B. Sign #2- Wars and rumors of war (compare Mark 13:7, Luke 21:9 adds “commotions”)

Matthew 24:6 - *“And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars.”* (Then Jesus adds a pastoral pause) - *“See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.”*

1. Military and political conflict
2. “You will hear of”- some will be true and some will be rumors. “See that you are not troubled” - there will be many paralyzed by fear, inward peace from the Holy Spirit will be one of the biggest needs of that day for us.

Matthew 24:7-8 - “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.”

C. Sign #3- “For nation will rise against nation”

1. The Greek word for nation in Mt. 24:7 is “*ethnos*” which translates into ethnic groups or tribes.
2. This could mean ethnic conflict, civil disorder and racism and genocide, as nation rises against nation.

D. Sign #4- “and kingdom against kingdom”

1. Economic warfare and hostility, aggression, and conflict
2. National leaders engaging/making war in the area of national resources and finances.

E. Sign #5- “There will be famines”

1. Massive food shortages because of societal reasons or judgments

F. Sign #6- “Pestilences”-

1. Epidemics, diseases.
2. The horrors of biological warfare could bring this to a new intensity as nations are developing genetically engineered viruses and bacteria that cannot be stopped by antibiotics.

G. Sign #7- “Earthquakes in various places” (Luke 21:11 says **great earthquakes)**

1. Great in destruction and loss of life.
2. “*in various places*”
3. There is no scientific evidence that earthquakes are increasing yet, but their destructive impact is because of the increase of populations in places where they occur.

H. Sign #8- “Commotions” (Luke 21:9)

1. The Greek word translated into commotions is “*akatastasia*” which means instability, or a state of disorder and disturbance. This could also be translated into rebellions, uprisings, and revolts and could include chaotic events in society.
2. Potential examples: violence involving terrorists groups, militias, escalation of border disputes, social and religious conflicts, and international strife.

I. Sign #9- “Fearful sights and great signs from heaven” (Luke 21:11) and “with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring” (Luke 21:25)

Luke 21:11, 25-26- “11 and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven... 25 And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26 men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth....

1. “Fearful sights and great signs from heaven”- traumatic events happening on the earth that people will witness. Includes signs in the sky and terrifying events related to the weather. Hearts will faint at the wicked expressions of humanity like cruelty, violence, and perversion.
2. “Perplexity” at the seas and waves roaring- we will be bewildered and confused to see the response of nature to the fullness of sin being expressed upon the earth.
3. These terrifying sights will only increase in the Great Tribulation (last 3 ½ years): the sea and fresh water will turn to blood, the sun will scorch people, darkness will come and people will gnaw their tongues in pain because of it (Rev. 16).