"THE BEGINNING OF THE END"

Matthew 24:1-14
12/2/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 4

***The Beginning of the End may be near!**
Don't be fooled as to when it will come.

In verses 5 - 15 Jesus gives 7 clear signs showing the Beginning of the End of this Age:

I. **<u>DECEPTION</u> by false Messiahs** (v. 5)

II. **<u>DESTRUCTION</u> by furious Wars** (v. 6-7a)

III. **<u>DISASTER</u> by Famines and Earthquakes** (v. 7b-8)

IV. **<u>DELIVERANCE TO PERSECUTION</u> by Foes of Jesus Christ** (v. 9)

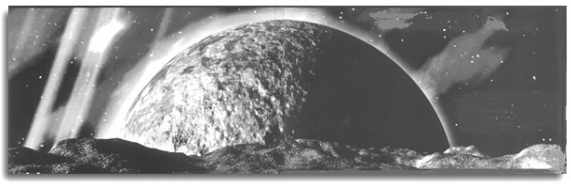
V. **<u>DEFECTION</u> by Fake Christians** (v. 10-13)

VI. **<u>DECLARATION</u> by Faithful Witnesses** (v. 14)

VII. **<u>DESECRATION</u> of a Future Holy Place** (v. 15)
[to be continued. . .]

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V. 1

After delivering a hot, piercing, pointed sermon to the Scribes and Pharisees and rebuking their hypocrisy, Jesus leaves the Temple. He had just said that their *"House"* (Temple) was left desolate (empty of God and true worship) (23:38). Upon hearing this judgment to befall that magnificent work of architecture, His disciples draw His attention to the huge, beautiful stones (15-20 feet in length) and wonderful buildings (Mk. 13:1) that Herod the Great had built.

V. 2

Those earthly temporal things which man takes pride in will all perish in time.

"Not one stone" - "Absolutely no remains of that magnificent structure are visible today. The stones of the western or Wailing Wall, site of prayers today, were not part of the Temple itself but of the retaining wall around the mount. According to Josephus, the city was dug up tot such an extent that it was difficult to believe it had ever been inhabited" (Will Varner, Israel My Glory, April, 1994, p. 8)

"Thrown down" - to tear down

Rome, under General Titus, totally tore down and burned the Temple and city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

V. 3

"As He sat upon the Mount of Olives" - It is interesting that the very Mount of Olives from which Jesus gave this End-time message is the spot to which He will return when He comes to judge this earth (Zech. 14:4).

Christ's message in Matthew 24 & 25 is commonly referred to as the Olivet Discourse because He gave it while sitting on the Mount of Olives (overlooking the city of Jerusalem).

The intimidated disciples secretly ask Jesus two questions.

Matthew records Christ's answers to the latter question, the more important question: ***"What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world*** *(age)?"*

Jesus' answer to the disciples' question is the longest answer He ever gave to a question (2 chapters, totaling 97 verses), and therefore shows us the importance of the details of this eschatological message.

The Bible does not teach "imminency" but rather "expectancy."

It is evident that the apostles believed that the Rapture could occur during their lifetime or generation, but this does not mean that they did not expect signs to precede His coming.

*The Rapture could not be imminent for Peter because he was told that he would die before the Rapture (Jn. 21:18-19; II Peter 1:14-15).

*The Rapture could not be imminent for Paul because he was informed that he had a great ministry ahead in Corinth (Acts 18:9-11).

--Paul also affirmed that two events had to precede the Day of Christ's return:
(II Thes. 2:1ff)

1) The apostasy
2) The revealing of the Man of Sin

While God's Word admonishes believers to *"watch"* (Rom. 13:11-12; I Th. 5:6-8; Lk. 12:35-40) and *"look"* (Ti. 2:13) for Christ's return, the Bible does <u>not</u> teach an "any-moment," "imminent," sign-less Rapture!

The world will be caught "off guard" like a *"thief in the night"*; however, God's Word is clear that the Day of the Lord's return will <u>not</u> catch believers as a *"thief."* (I Th. 5:4 - *"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief")*

What Jesus gives in vv. 4-28 are events that must transpire <u>before</u> the sign of His coming. They are "signs" indicating that the time is approaching, but are not the "sign" that the time has arrived.

"The <u>sign</u> (singular) ***of Thy coming" -*** The sign of Christ's coming is given in vv. 29-30. This sign, which will occur when the sixth seal is loosed in Rev. 6:12, will fulfill Joel 2:31, which foretold that this "sign" of the sun being darkened and the moon turning blood-red will come immediately <u>before</u> the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

"Your coming" - Your *"parousias"* (speaks of His personal presence at his second advent)

[This word is used to speak of the Rapture throughout the New Testament (v. 27, 37, 39; I Cor. 15:23; I Th. 2:19, 3:13, 4:15, 5:23; II Th. 2:1, 8; Ja. 5:7, 8; II Pet. 1:16, 3:4; I Jn. 2:28).]

Jesus is coming again!

"The end of the world" - lit. "the completion of the age" (*aionos)*

Not speaking of the obliteration of the earth (as some Bible teachers suggest), but of the end of this Age, before the Millennial Age.

The end of this Age will end the age of "man" and will commence the Day of the Lord.

How will we know when the end of this Age is to come? Jesus gives specific, detailed descriptions of life on earth prior to His coming.

V. 4

"Take heed that no man deceive you" - Be on the look out so that no one will mislead you or cause you to err regarding Christ's return (a favorite subject that many cults have used to trap and mislead people is the subject of the Last Days, particularly the issue of Christ's coming).

"The teaching of the Olivet discourse is much debated and frequently misunderstood, largely because it is viewed through the lens of a particular theological system or interpretive scheme that makes the message appear complex and enigmatic. . . the intricate interpretations that are sometimes proposed for this passage would have left the disciples utterly dumbfounded. It is preferable to take Jesus' words as simply and as straight-forwardly as possible." (MacArthur, p. 2).

Verses 5-8 deal with the first half of the last 7 years, and verses 9-ff deal with the second half.

***The Beginning of the End may be near!**
Don't be fooled as to when it will come.

In verses 5 - 15 Jesus gives 7 clear signs showing the Beginning of the End of this Age:

I. **DECEPTION by false Messiahs** (v. 5)

"Many will come" -

"Although many false Messiahs have appeared in the last 2,000 years (Simon BarCochba, Shabbettai Zvi, and today's [most recent] Menachem Mendel Schneerson, to name just a view), Scripture indicates that at the beginning of the [final 7 years] Tribulation period many more will claim to be the Messiah. Satanic deception will be rampant." (Mark Robinson, Israel My Glory, April, 1994, p. 10)

"In My name" - They will seize upon a title that only belongs to Jesus of Nazareth. Where there is the true, Satan will see to it that there are many imposters so as to deceive. (this is why there are so many religions today -- to deceive).

"I am the Christ" - I am the one whom the Prophets foretold! I am the Messiah!

"Follow me," they will say; "I am your deliverer, your savior, your way to God."

The ultimate deceiver will be the "Antichrist" (I Jn. 2:18; Ii Th. 2:3ff). As his title suggest (*"Anti"* = instead of), this diabolical counterfeit will pose as a Messiah instead of or in the place of the true Christ. Many Gentiles and particularly Jews will blindly follow Him. The whole world (God's children and the sealed elect excluded) will worship Him beginning at the mid-point of the final 7 years (Rev. 13).

God said of Israel: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"* (Hos. 4:6).

Those who lack a knowledge of Scripture will always be prime game for Satan's deceivers. Only the truth can set you free (Jn. 8:32).

II. **DESTRUCTION** by furious Wars (v. 6-7a)

V. 7

During the first 3 1/2 years of the final 7 years of this Age, nations and kingdoms will fight for global supremacy.

The world will eventually be divided up into 10 empires (10 sovereign nations). When Antichrist assumes global power, three of the ten will be overpowered by Him (Dan. 7:7, 20, 24; Rev. 12:3, 13:1; 17:3ff).

V. 6

"Wars and rumors of wars" - not small skirmishes, but major battles.

As Antichrist rises to world power, wars and rumors of wars will increase. At the mid-point of the 70th week, Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies (Lk. 21:20) and Antichrist will receive a fatal wound before being miraculously healed (Rev. 13:14).

"Be not troubled" - few of life's experiences are as frightening as wars (especially with today's weaponry and military artillery of mass destruction).

The atomic, nuclear and chemical warfare devices in our world today can wipe out millions with one push of a button! [But man will not destroy the world;; that judgment will be performed by Jesus Christ.]

"Be not troubled" - Believers can take solace in the fact that when they see these events transpire, it will prove that God's Word is true and trustworthy and that His plan is being fulfilled right on schedule.

"But the end is not yet" - At the end, people will feel secure with the New World Order fully in place and with the Antichrist in global authority. After the mid-point, the heathen world will have a false sense of *"peace and safety"* (I Th. 5:3).

III. DISASTER by Famines and Earthquakes (v. 7b-8)

V. 7

"Famines" - The result of three things:

1. Wars (as mentioned above)

2. Drought (for 3 1/2 years the earth will receive no rain, during the ministry of God's 2 witnesses - Rev. 11:3, 6)

3. Plagues (disease - Rev. 11:6)

[Note: such food shortage will incite nations to seek to conquer and spoil other nations' goods and natural resources]

"Earthquakes" - God will send earthquakes to shake up and wake up people from spiritual apathy and deadness. Earthquakes definitely get man's attention.

The plates upon which earth's land masses rest will shift and slide more and more as the end approaches. The fault lines will snap;; whole civilizations will affected.

A huge quake will hit Israel at the mid-point of the final 7 years (Rev. 1:13), which will kill 7,000 men.

But the grand quake of them all will come at the end of the final seven year period of history - which will wreck every city on earth! (Rev. 16:18 - *"And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.")*

V. 8

"The beginning of sorrows" - These are merely foreshadows, or previews of the disasters to follow in the Day of the Lord.

Jesus in Matthew 24:8 is describing the pre-labor pains to occur prior to Paul's reference to the actual labor (*"travail upon a woman with child"* - I Th. 5:3) (note: The word *"sorrows"* (*odinon* - Mt. 24:8) is plural; whereas the word *"travail"* is singular and has the definite article (*ha odin*), referring to the unescapable pain of delivery in childbirth.

IV. DELIVERANCE TO PERSECUTION by Foes of Jesus Christ (v. 9)

"Deliver you up" - The lost, godless, Antichrist-worshipping world will hand Christians over to the intense pressures of affliction and tribulation.

At that time, the lines will be clearly drawn between believer and non-believer. Following Jesus Christ will be a severe criminal offense. They will have "wanted" posters posted in search of those who reject the mark of the Beast.

"And shall kill you" - Multitudes of people who reject the mark of the Beast will be hunted down and killed (Rev. 13:7 - *"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."*)

Whoever will refuse to worship the image of the Beast will also be putt to death (Rev. 13:15).

"You shall be hated of all nations" - No nation will be called a "Christian nation." God's people will be despised on every continent, because people from all walks of life will be followers of the Beast (Rev. 13). There will be no country in which to seek religious asylum.

"For My Name's sake" - Christians will be killed simply because they belong to Jesus. Note: When God's people are attacked, it is really Christ they are attacking.

Some of God's reasons for allowing His children to be persecuted are:

1) To purify their faith (Ja. 1; I Pet. 1)

2) To purge out the phonies

If they were arresting people for being Christians today, would there be enough evidence from your life to convict you?

V. DEFECTION by Fake Christians (v. 10-13)

V. 10

"Many (shall) be offended" - Professors, but not possessors, of salvation will "fall away"; they will *"depart from the faith"* (I Tim. 4:1).

This is the great *"Apostasy"* ("falling away") that Paul said will precede the Day 0of Christ (II Thes. 2:3).

The true colors of all will be revealed in the Great Tribulation. There will be no doubt as to which side people are on.

Pretenders eventually defect from Christianity (I Jn. 2:19 - *"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."*).

"Deliver up one another" - Because of the great pressures the Tribulation will bring, many people will turn each other in to governing authorities (no doubt for reward).

Even your family will turn against you in the Tribulation (Mk. 13:12 - *"Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death."*; cp. Lk. 21:16).

V. 11

Because spiritual deception will be the hallmark of the Tribulation, Jesus interjects that thought again.

The false prophets will no doubt prophesy against God's people and the lost will believe them.

V. 12

"Iniquity shall abound" - Lawlessness will flowing through the streets. Moral absolutes will be thrown out the window. "Down with Christian ethics," the world will chant. "Away with the 10 commandments!"

"The man of sin" will convince the world to throw off moral restraints. Such an anti-law, anti-moral absolute mentality will affect people's love.

"The love of many shall wax cold" - Note: True love resides where truth abides.

When people reject God's laws, they in turn become totally self-centered and inconsiderate of others.

"Love" which is "others' oriented" will become cold.

Where sin reigns, love wanes.

"Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money. . . lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." (II Tim. 3:1-5).

V. 13

"He that shall endure unto the end" - Those who remain under the pressures without giving up and giving in (the Antichrist world) until the completion of this Age will be saved.

Not speaking about soteriology (the new birth experience), but salvation in the same way Paul uses the term in I Th. 5:8-10 (*"But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.")*

"Shall be saved" - Saved from God's wrath, by means of the Rapture!

Jesus will also deliver His people from the world's wrath at His coming.

The days of the Tribulation are *"cut short for the elect's sake"* (v. 22).

A knowledge of what is coming to the lost Beast worshippers will be a great incentive for God's people to remain patient through it all (Rev. 14:9-12).

Who are the enduring saints? (SEE: Rev. 7:14-17).

VI. <u>DECLARATION</u> by Faithful Witnesses (v. 14)

Saved Jews will declare the Message (Mt.10:23)
An Angel will declare the Message(Rev.14:6)

VII. <u>DESECRATION</u> of a Future Holy Place (v. 15)
[to be continued. . .]

CONCLUSION:

Note: There is perfect harmony between Matthew 24:5-31 and the Seals of Revelation 6.

The Harmony of Matthew 24 & Revelation 6	
Matthew 24	**Revelation 6**
v.4-5 **Deception**	Seal # 1 **Deception**
v.6-7a **War**	Seal # 2 **War**
v.7b **Famine**	Seal # 3 **Famine**
v.7-8 **Death & Destruction**	Seal # 4 **Death & Destruction**
v.9-22 **Persecution** (Innocent Bloodshed)	Seal # 5 **Persecution** (Innocent Bloodshed)
v.29-31 **Cosmic Signs** **(Sun & Moon Altered)**	Seal # 6 **Cosmic Signs** **(Sun & Moon altered)**

THE FINAL 7 YEARS OF THIS AGE

The Disciples asked the Lord Jesus Christ:
"What shall be the sign of thy coming,
and of the end of the world (age)?" (Matthew 24:33)

Overview & Comparison of the SIGNS of the end of the age			
MATTHEW 24	**REVELATION 6**	**LUKE 17**	**LUKE 21**
False Messiahs (v.4-5)	Antichrist's rise to power (v.2)		False Messiahs (v.8)
Wars & Rumors of Wars (v.6-7a)	Wars & Bloodshed (v.3-4)		Wars & Commotions (v.9-10)
Famine, disease, scattered earthquakes (v.7b-8)	Famine, Death (v.5-8)		Earthquakes, famines, pestilences (v.11)
Persecution of God's people & Deception (v.9-28) God's people - hated (v.9) God's people - betrayed (even by family) (v.10) **Abomination of Desolation by Antichrist** (v.15) Sever persecution (v.16-22) False signs & wonders to deceive (v.24)	Martyrdom of God's people	Trouble that will cause God's people to long for Christ's Return & Deception (v.22-23)	Persecution of God's people (v.12-24) God's people betrayed by family & friends (v.16) God's people hated (v.17) **Abomination of Desolation by Antichrist** (v.20)
Cosmic Disturbances (v.29-30)	Cosmic Disturbances (v.12-14)		Cosmic Disturbances (v.25-26)
The Second Coming of Christ (v.31-44) -some taken - Rapture -some left - Wrath	The Wrath of the Lamb (v.15-17)	The Second Coming of Christ (v.24-37) -some taken - Rapture -some left - Immediate Wrath	The Second Coming of Christ (v.27-36)

THE DAY OF THE LORD

- Trumpet Judgements (Rev. 8-9, 11:15-19)
- Bowl Judgements (Rev. 15-16)

--The End is coming. Are you ready?

--The end of your life is coming. Are you ready to meet God?