“Be Prepared For What Is Ahead!”

Matthew 24:15-28

12-9-2018

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

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

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

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

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

5. **DEFECTION by Fake Christians** (v. 10-13)

6. **DECLARATION by Faithful Witnesses** (v. 14)

7. **DESECRATION of a Future Holy Place** (v. 15)

Jesus said: *". . . Whoso readeth, let him understand"* (v. 15)

***Be ready! Be prepared for what is ahead!**

In verses 15-28 Jesus gives us two more signs which begin at the mid-point of the final 7 years of this age:

I. Be Ready for End-Time TROUBLE (v. 15-22)

(Great & powerful Satanic Tribulation is coming in the Last Days)

II. Be Ready for End-Time TRICKS (v. 23-28)

(Great & powerful Satanic Deception is coming in the Last Days)

"Be Prepared For What Is Ahead!" *(Part 2)*

Matthew 24:15-28

12-16-2018

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

1. **DECEPTION by false Messiahs** (v. 5)
2. **DESTRUCTION by furious Wars** (v. 6-7a)
3. **DISASTER by Famines and Earthquakes** (v. 7b-8)
4. **DELIVERANCE TO PERSECUTION by Foes of Jesus Christ** (v. 9)
5. **DEFECTION by Fake Christians** (v. 10-13)
6. **DECLARATION by Faithful Witnesses** (v. 14)
7. **DESECRATION of a Future Holy Place** (v. 15)

Jesus said: *". . . Whoso readeth, let him understand"* (v. 15)

***Be ready! Be prepared for what is ahead!**

In verses 15-28 Jesus gives us two more signs which begin at the mid-point of the final 7 years of this age:

I. Be Ready for End-Time _____ (v. 15-22)

(Great & powerful Satanic _____ is coming in the Last Days)

II. Be Ready for End-Time _____ (v. 23-28)

(Great & powerful Satanic _____ is coming in the Last Days)

“Be Prepared For What Is Ahead!”

Matthew 24:15-28

12-9-2018

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus in this chapter answers the question, *"What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?"* (v. 3).

The particular sign He gives is in vv. 29-30; however, the events that lead up to that specific sign are given in vv. 5-28.

*Review exposition of vv. 5-14.

***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:

1. **DECEPTION by false Messiahs** (v. 5)
2. **DESTRUCTION by furious Wars** (v. 6-7a)
3. **DISASTER by Famines and Earthquakes** (v. 7b-8)
4. **DELIVERANCE TO PERSECUTION by Foes of Jesus Christ** (v. 9)
5. **DEFECTION by Fake Christians** (v. 10-13)
6. **DECLARATION by Faithful Witnesses** (v. 14)
7. **DESECRATION of a Future Holy Place** (v. 15)

The Bible speaks of a great abandonment of Christianity to occur in the Last Days (I Tim. 4:1 NKJV - *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons."*)

Satan has many ways to ruin or destroy people; he employs many methods to turn them away from the truth. Two of the most basic methods he and his co-horts use are described by Jesus in Matthew 24:15-28.

Satan will either seek to trouble you (v. 15-22) or trick you (v. 23-28).

To test one's faith, Satan will use two weapons. The devil will either employ: tribulation or deception (either he will seek to pressure you with fear or fool you with falsehood).

The Bible uses 2 word pictures to describe Satan's character and tactics (Rev. 12:9 - *"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.")*

He is called:

1) A "Dragon" - who intimidates with fear
2) A "Serpent" (snake) - who deludes with lies

Many Christians today are told they will never have to face the Antichrist nor face the trials of the future Tribulation.

ILLUS: (preparation in boot camp and military training) One prepares differently for battle when told, "Men, we are preparing for battle, but I have good news for you: there will never be a war." than when told, "Men, we are preparing for battle, and there will be a war."

Jesus said: *". . . Whoso readeth, let him understand"* (v. 15)

***Be ready! Be prepared for what is ahead!**

In verses 15-28 Jesus gives us two more signs which begin at the mid-point of the final 7 years of this age:

I. Be Ready for End-Time TROUBLE (v. 15-22)

(Great & powerful Satanic Tribulation is coming in the Last Days)

V. 15

"Spoken of by Daniel" - SEE: Daniel 9:2, 24 - 27

Daniel 9:27

"He" - "the prince that shall come" (v. 26) - not Christ but the Antichrist.

"Confirm" = to make stand; to establish (same word as in v.12); AntiChrist may reaffirm a convenant already made; He will make it a strong covenant. Perhaps by force; with mighty global power, the Antichrist will ratify a peace treaty.

"Covenant" - a binding promise of peace; a pact; a treaty (the Antichrist will be the Diplomat of Diplomats. He will do what no leader, no nation, and no United Nations Peace plan has ever accomplished. He will "settle" the Arab-Israeli conflict.)

Such a peace proposal is right on the horizon. The rider on the white horse is coming! Rev. 6:2

"With many" - a peace treaty will be signed between Israel and the many Arab nations that have plagued them throughout history (Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, the PLO, Jordan, Saudi Arabia; Iraq, Iran, etc.)

"For one week" = one period of 7 years.

"A world leader signs a 7 year peace treaty" will one day be the headlines in the NY Times and Daily News. This period of 7 years refers to the 70th week of Daniel (v. 24). 69 are now history; one more period of seven is yet to be fulfilled.

**This signing of a 7-year covenant marks the beginning of the Tribulation period. From the day this covenant is signed, exactly 2,520 days will remain for Antichrist's reign.

"In the midst of the week" = at the mid-point of the 7 years; after 3 1/2 years, he (Antichrist_ will put an end to the Jewish sacrifices and offerings. He will stop the Jew's worship of Jehovah and will set Himself up in their Temple and demand worship, claiming to be God - SEE Mt. 24:15; II Thes. 2:4.

The mid-point of the Tribulation marks the time of Antichrist's recovery from a deadly wound (SEE Rev. 13:3-8), the issuing of the mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:16-18); and the hottest anti-Jewish, anti-Christian persecution to ever be experienced (Rev. 12:12-17).

"Abominations . . . make it desolate" - the Antichrist, who will stand (as "God") in the Holy Temple, will thereby make the temple an abominable (polluted) place and a desolate place (since the Jews will flee Jerusalem at this point - Mt. 24:15ff).

Jerusalem's desolation - cp. Zech. 14:1, 2

"Even until the consummation" - the Temple will be polluted and desolate - right until the end of the 70th week.

"That determined shall be poured upon the desolate" - what God has decreed will be poured upon the Jews at that time (SEE: Rev. 12).

"When" - speaks of a specific point in time in the future when this prophecy will be fulfilled.

"See" - To see with the eyes (not some vague experience; but a clear manifestation)

Luke gives an expansion of what Jesus said in v. 15 - Luke 21:20 - *"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."*

These armies will inflict a fatal wound on the Antichrist (Dan. 11:40 - 12:1), who will miraculously be healed and elevated to global authority and worship at Jerusalem (Rev. 13).

"The Abomination of Desolation" -

"Abomination" = an object of disgust; something detestable; an abhorrent thing.

"Desolation" - to be empty; deserted, barren, laid waste (cp. Mt. 23:38).

The phrase *"abomination of desolation"* refers to an "object of disgust" being set up in the "Holy Place" which causes that place to become "wasted, ruined, and deserted" of its worshippers.

The word "*abomination"* is a neuter, singular noun, pointing to a specific "thing" that will stand in the Jewish "Holy Place" (cp. Mk. 13:14 - *"it"*).

It refers not merely to the Antichrist himself, but to the "image" (idol, statue of the Antichrist) ("the image of the Beast" which will one day be erected in Jerusalem's Temple (Rev. 13:14-15).

"Stand (lit. standing) ***in the Holy Place" -*** SEE: II Thes. 2:1-12. V. 4 - *"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."*)

This "temple" is one that the Jews are ready to build (the only questions are where and when). The phrase ***"temple of God"*** does not mean that God is in favor of this temple; it simply means that from the Jews' standpoint, it will be a temple dedicated to God (but desecrated by the Antichrist) (Rev. 11:1-2 - *"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.")*

The future Abomination of the Jewish temple (Dan. 9:27; 12:11) can be previewed by comparing it with the past Abomination of Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. 11:31), who slew an abominable pig on the Temple's altar, compelled the priests to eat its flesh, and then erected an idol of Zeus in the Temple.

"Whoso readeth, let him understand" - This urgent exhortation to comprehend this future sign shows its importance.

Verses 16-22 describe the most intense persecution of human life ever to be experienced.

V. 16

The land of Israel, particularly the land surrounding the city of Jerusalem.

"Flee into the mountains" - Run away toward the southeast to the mountains of the wilderness of Judea, or to the mountains of Petra.

Why escape to the mountains? To hide and seek refuge from Satan's fierce persecution (Rev. 12:6, 13-17).

V. 17

"Him. . . on the housetop not come down" - The housetops were places of leisure and relaxation.

Jesus is not saying, "Don't come down"; rather, "Don't come down with the intent of packing your suitcase." Don't worry about packing your bags. Just get down and RUN!

V. 18

If news hits the fields that Antichrist has abominated the Holy Place, don't go home to gather a change of clothing; just run with what you've got on!

V. 19

"Woe" - an expression of <u>sorrow</u> for someone

"With child" - pregnant women. It will be extremely difficult for pregnant women [particularly in the latter months] to run many many miles to flee from the bloodshed.

"Them that give suck" - to mothers with nursing babies. For a mother to run for miles carrying an infant will be intensely difficult. To stop for feedings will be impossible.

V. 20

"Flight" - does not refer to an air-lift on a "El Al" Airlines 747 jet, but refers to the fleeing (running) from the Antichrist's persecution.

"Not in the winter" - Cold weather would make travelling unbearable, especially going up to higher elevations.

"The Sabbath day" - Jews have a law that they can't walk more than a mile on the Sabbath. This running would cause them to violate their Sabbath law, if that time should fall on a Sabbath.

V. 21

"Then . . . great tribulation" - The Tribulation period is technically not the entire 70th week of Daniel; rather, the word *"tribulation"* is only used to refer to the last 3-1/2 years.

"Great tribulation" - enormous pressure, intense trial. Difficulty for Israel and the Church beyond compare.

God promises to protect a remnant of His faithful people through this time (Rev. 3:10).

NOTE: Jesus does not promise removal from the Tribulation, but protection (for a faithful remnant) through it (*"Keep thee from" =* guard you from - cp. Jn. 17:15).

This time of persecution will be unparalleled by anything that preceded it.

It will surpass (be worse than):

- Israel's slavery in Egypt
- Israel's conquest by Babylon
- Israel's horror inflicted by Antiochus Epiphanes in 171 - 165 B.C. (Dan. 8:14)
- Israel's slaughter by Rome in 70 A.D.
- Israel's holocaust by Germany in the 20th century

The *"Tribulation"* spoken of here is not:

--"The Day of the Lord's wrath" (this does not begin until v. 29; cp. Joel 2:31)

--God's wrath, but Satan's wrath being vented toward God's people (Luke 21:23; cp. with Rev. 12:12, 17).

Although God allows this Tribulation to fall, and He is sovereign over these events (Rev. 6 - the *"seals"*), He has not yet begun the *"Day of the Lord."*

The context surrounding v. 21 clearly identifies this tribulation as coming from Antichrist.

*SEE: Revelation 12:1-f

> (When the dragon [Satan] persecutes the woman (Israel) . . . God will provide refuge in the wilderness for this remnant of Jews for 1,260 days.)

Note: This wilderness refuge will be where God fulfills Ezekiel 20:35-36 - *"And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God."*

V. 22

"Shortened" - Jesus is not teaching that the Great Tribulation will be shortened (it will last a full 3 1/2 years). What He is teaching is that it will be shortened (lit. "cut short" or "limited") for the elect.

Why is this period limited only for the elect's sake? Could it be because they are raptured prior to the very end? Or could it be that God has limited it to only 3-1/2 years - Mark 13:20.

"There should no flesh be saved" - Not speaking of the flesh of the persecutors, but the persecuted.

No believer would live, if God had not shortened that time of Tribulation.

No believer would be left alive to be *"saved"* (raptured) in living bodies, unless those days of Tribulation were shortened. However, we who are *"alive and remain shall be caught up. . ."* (I Th. 4:17).

II. Be Ready for End-Time TRICKS (v. 23-28)
(Great & powerful Satanic Deception is coming in the Last Days)

V. 23

You should never "believe" what any man says, but only what the Scriptures teach.

False messiahs will abound. The Antichrist will be the ultimate deceiver, mascarading as the messiah (instead of Christ = AntiChrist) until his true identity is revealed to Israel at the mid-point of the 70th week (v. 15).

V. 24

The ***"false prophets"*** will be promoters of the false Christs (as the False Prophet will be for the Antichrist - Rev. 13:12).

"Great signs and wonders" - not just miracles, but great miracles (awesome, breath-taking, indisputable, supernatural [demonic] signs will be performed).

"Signs" - miracles to vindicate someone or something (to prove the authenticity of something).

"Wonders" - miracles to cause amazement (to marvel an audience).

If God is sovereignly in control of all things, why would He allow Satan's servants to perform such realistic miracles?

Answer: To prove your love for Him and your commitment to His Word.

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 13:1-3).

No miracle proves any message or messenger to be true, if that message or messenger is contrary to the Word of God.

As believers, the basis of our authority is not . . .

--What we "experience" with our senses (it is not what we see, hear, feel, or sense).

Our senses are often deceiving. There is a realm of existence outside of your sense that will delude you if you function in this carnal realm and don't trust the Word of One who exists outside of our senses.

The Bible is our only authority for what we believe to be true in the spiritual realm.

God's people will only overcome the deception of Antichrist by the Blood and the Word (Rev. 12:11 - *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death")*

Do you know the Scriptures?

--Are you able to give a Biblical reason for your salvation?

--Are you able to refute a cult that denies Christ's deity?

--Are you able to examine a doctrine or practice and measure it be the Scriptures to see if it is right or wrong?

--Can you refute the "date setters" who say that Christ is coming back September '94?

--Do you know why you believe what you believe, or do you cling to "borrowed" convictions?

--Are you able to *"prove* (test) *all things"*? (I Th. 5:21-22).

"If it were possible" - Which it is not! (John 10:27-28). Those signs will be so real, so amazing, so believable that it will get some believers to ponder and question the validity of them. Only the Biblically literate elect will see through the lies and deception.

Knowing and believing the truth is the only way to avoid the greatest deception ever to come (SEE: II Thes. 2:9-12).

The reason why you are considered *"blessed"* for reading and hearing the book of Revelation is because *"the time is at hand"* (Rev. 1:3). A knowledge of prophecy will fortify you to withstand the Satanic assaults to come!

V. 25

"Behold, I have told you before" - Look, I am warning you in advance. I am forewarning you ahead of time. Without Scriptural forewarning, everyone would be deluded!

V. 26

So as to kill God's people, they will seek to draw their victims away to isolated

deserts, or hidden inner rooms.

V. 27

Christ's coming will be as ***"lightning"***. What is He teaching by this metaphor?

1. Christ's coming will be <u>sudden</u> (not a gradual event stretched over a long period of time that will require messengers to announce it).

2. Christ's coming will be <u>visible</u> (not a cryptic, unknown, undiscernible event - Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:17)

   This is the main point of V. 27. The "shining" of lightning can be seen (cp. Luke 17:23). Our Lord's coming will be visible - v. 30.

V. 28

"Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together" - How does this statement tie in with the context of Christ's return?

It appears that Christ is using a well-known Jewish proverb (Job 39:30; Hab. 1:8) to illustrate that just as eagles quickly gather around a carcass, so believers will immediately be gathered around our Savior who died for us.

(The disciples asked Jesus *"<u>Where</u>"* will the Raptured be "taken"? He responded with this same parable - Luke 17:36-37.)

CONCLUSION:

Is there any degree of trouble or tricks that could pull you away from Christ and His Word?