

A FULLY PREPARED GENERATION

Jesus really is going to return again. He is not coming in a vacuum, apart from a season of preparation. He will have a strategic plan and a people who will partner with Him to see this plan unfold and be accomplished. Jesus is not playing “catch-up” with Satan and trying to counteract Satan’s strategies. Jesus is the wisest King and Leader, in time and outside of time. He is coming to transition the current world system to an eternal Heavenly system. This is our hope! This is the full promise of the “Good News” we testify to. We must declare the work that Jesus did and accomplished as well as understand and declare what He will do in the future.

3 PRIMARY TIME-FRAMES FOR THE END-TIME GENERATION AWAITING JESUS’ RETURN

- **1ST TIME FRAME:** BEGINNING OF SORROWS/*BIRTH PANGS* (Mt. 24:4-14; Lk. 21:23, 25)
- **2ND TIME FRAME:** INCREASED LABOR PANGS/*COUNTERFIET WORLD PEACE* (Dan. 9:27; first 3½ year period)
- **3RD TIME FRAME:** HARD LABOR PANGS/*GREAT TRIBULATION* (final 3½ year period)

Matthew 24:3-8 *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?” **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.”*

I. THE COMMAND TO KNOW THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

- A. The entire chapter of Mt. 24 is devoted to ‘answering the disciples’ questions about when Jesus will return to set up His kingdom on earth.
 - **Matthew 24:3-** “...*Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?*”
- B. “**Parousia**” (Gk.)- Jesus’ coming or arrival; This word has an understanding of more than simply appearing but it implies His remaining (**Mt.24:3; 24:7; 24:37; 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thes. 3:13; 4:15; 2 Pet. 3:12**).
- C. Jesus is only returning once and when He comes, He is remaining and not going away. This was and is to this day the common Jewish understanding.
- D. When Jesus does return, it will NOT be a secret event. It will be the most glorious and fearful day known to all of humanity. The Father and the Son have been planning this day for eternity. It will be glorious with great celebration for God’s chosen Saints.
- E. **Revelation 1:7** *Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.*
- F. Jesus rebuked His generation for NOT knowing the hour upon them (**Mt. 23:37-39; 24:36**).
- G. Jesus’ generation rejected Him and missed it; the hour of their visitation.
- H. Jesus gives the first prescription and warning for discerning the end-time generation. That generation will be marked by intense deception. There will be a systematic attempt to deceive many from the Truth of Jesus’ return. Demons and doctrines of man alike will attempt to minimize the command of

Jesus to know the signs of the time. We must ask Holy Spirit for clarity in understanding the times & seasons and boldness to teach others the revealed Truth.

- I. **John 16:12-13** *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*
- J. **John 3:34** *For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.*
- K. **Israel-Centric:** All Biblical prophecy, including end-time prophecies, is **Israel centric**. This means Israel has to be able to discern and see these end-time prophecies unfold. This means that Israel has to be a people and a nation in order for them to be fulfilled. In 1948 the Jews returned to Israel after W.W. II and regained their land. In 1967 the Jews regained their capital city of Jerusalem after 1900 years of being scattered around the world.
 1. **Isaiah 11:11-12** *"It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left...¹²He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."*
 2. **Jeremiah 30:3** *"...I will bring back from captivity my people Israel and Judah, says the Lord. And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it."*
 3. **Ezekiel 38:8** *"After many days you will be visited. In the later years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely."*
- L. God has a "time-clock" that He has chosen to work with in this earthly age. ISRAEL! Jesus is defining the beginning and the end of the final season and generation before He returns to the earth.
- M. Jesus describes the "first time-frame" or season leading to His return as "the beginning of sorrows".
- N. **Matthew 24:8-** *"All these are the beginning of sorrows."*
 - a. **Negative Trends:** Deception, False christs, Wars & Rumors of Wars, Nation Against Nation, Kingdom Against Kingdom, Famines, Pestilences, Earthquakes, Falling away from faith in Christ, Persecution of Christians, Increase in lawlessness, etc. These signs will be both natural and man-made. They are meant to serve as sign-posts for the return of Christ, The Messiah.
 - b. **Positive Trends:** Gospel will be declared to every people, tribe, and language; Great Commission will be completed, Salvation of Israel and Jews, Night & Day prayer & worship covering the earth, Holy Spirit being poured out in great power, signs & wonders, , etc., Fathers hearts being turned to young people for discipling a Voluntary Missions Movement.

II. SIGNS OF JESUS' RETURN: GREAT DECEPTION

- A. **Matthew 24:4** *And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.*
- B. **2 Thess. 2:3-** *"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away (from faith) comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,.."*
- C. Jesus commands every church in Revelation to "...have eyes to see & ears to hear".
- D. The first instruction from Jesus was to have discernment and to rightly perceive the time and season.

- E. Jesus was warning of the increase of Satan's deception on the earth. There would be an attempt to minimize the importance of preparing, confusion over the timing of His return, and false Christs or Messengers of God's Word. Jesus warned that "many" would come in His name and would deceive many.
- F. **Matthew 24:4-12** describes the misleading signs that would mark not the end, but the "beginning of sorrows". The Jewish understanding of Christ is both the Son of God and any "anointed one" and chosen spokesperson of God.
- G. **False Christ/Deceiving Many:**
- a. **False Messiahs**- From the 1st Century to today there have been nearly 20 Jewish false Christs. There have been over 30 Christian false Christs. There have been at least 7 Muslim false Christs. There have also been a number of other mixed religious leaders who have claimed "I'm the Messiah". (*Wikipedia research*)
 - b. **False Gospel Messages**- There have been many examples of false truths and false doctrines throughout the history of the Church of Jesus. Many of these doctrines have led to movements and have deceived many and led them away from the Truth and revelation of Jesus. I will mention only a couple that we are confronting today in the Church of Jesus.
 1. **False/Hyper Grace Message**- Simply stated, there are many who are receiving a false understanding of the power and purpose of God's undeserved Grace; to save us FROM sin and to give us Power to resist sin in the future. Grace is the life of God released by the Holy Spirit enabling us to walk in obedience to His commands.
 2. **Acceptance of Same-Sex Unions**- Many Christian denominations in America are allowing and embracing same-sex marriages in the name of love and tolerance. Some are simply giving way to the cultural pressures to conform. **Those supporting:** "Conservative Jewish Movement", "Episcopal Church", "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America", "Presbyterian Church (USA)", "Reform Jewish Movement", "Society of Friends (Quakers)", "Unitarian Universalists Association of Churches", "United Church of Christ" ... **Those rejecting:** "American Baptist Churches", "Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)", "Islam", "Orthodox Jewish Movement", "Roman Catholic Church", "Southern Baptist Convention", "United Methodist Church", "Assemblies of God Churches",...
 3. **Trans-Gender Ideology**- This is the idea that someone can choose their own gender, depending on their personal preference. For a great number of biblical thought and insight, I highly recommend "The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood"
(<https://cbmw.org/>)
 - There has been a slow increase of Americans expressing their belief that a person's sex/tender is determined at birth since 2017 to today.
 - **From Pew Research:** All U.S. Citizens surveyed increased from 54% to 60% believing sex is determined at birth. Other individual groups identifying an increase between 2017 to today: *Protestants, Catholics, Religiously Unaffiliated, etc.*
 - <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/07/07/attitudes-about-transgender-issues-vary-widely-among-christians-religious-nones-in-u-s/>
 - c. **Confusion Over the Return of Christ & Timing of the Rapture of the Church**- Simply stated, there are at least 3 major viewpoints on the timing of the Rapture of the Church: *Pre-tribulation, Mid-tribulation, Post-tribulation*. The greatest percentage of the Church of Jesus historically has held to the post-tribulation rapture of God's people. Our concern must be for the Church to prepare

for the day and for the Bride of Christ to make herself ready. There will be many in the church that fall into great deception, disillusionment, and confusion over the timing of Jesus' return.

- d. A Form of Godliness but Denying Its Power- I mention this concern though it is quickly shifting across the globe and in many denominations simply because we are recognizing our great need for the fullness of God's resources. The fastest growing church movements in the earth are those who welcome and embrace the leadership, fruit, and gifts of Holy Spirit in this hour (**2 Tim. 3:5**). Our need is to embrace the power, signs, and wonders of Holy Spirit not just in word but also in deed. We must have all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in operation in order to complete the task of the Great Commission across the earth.

III. SIGNS OF JESUS' RETURN: THE FRUIT OF GREAT DECEPTION

- A. **Mt. 24:9-12** *"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.*
1. The offense over who Jesus is and how He has planned to judge wickedness will offend many, even Christians. Jesus often offends the mind to reveal the heart. God is much greater than our own personal experience of Him.
 2. Suffering happens to everyone, even American Christians. Judgment from God targets only sinful humanity and wicked demons of darkness!
 3. **Mt. 26:41**- *"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*
 4. Jesus was saying to His disciples that without maintaining a spirit of prayer, they could fall in temptation or deception.
 5. **Christians who do not have a lifestyle of prayer in the hour we are beginning to walk into will be tempted to fall away. Ministries who do not have a culture of prayer will not exist (Mt. 25:8)**
 6. **Mt. 24:43**- *"But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.*
 - The Thief, who is Satan, is going to deceive many, even the elect if possible (**Mt. 24:24**).
 7. "Therefore"- "...Be ready" Jesus says in **Mt. 24:44**.
 8. **Mark 13:37**- *"I say to you what I say to everyone: Watch for him!"* (NLT)
 9. We must keep our eyes open to see rightly and ears open to hear clearly! This is our call in the hour of the greatest crisis known to human history and the promise of the greatest revival and awakening through all of human history!
- O. **Persecution**- There will be an increase in the persecution of Christians and Jews before Jesus returns. Jesus says this will be a sign of His return. The Vatican reported in June 2013 that nearly **100,000** Christians are killed because of their faith in Jesus in recent years. About two-hundred million Christians currently live under persecution and those numbers are on the rise in recent years in countries like Egypt, Pakistan, Syria, and Nigeria. Church buildings are burned almost daily in some regions by Muslim radicals.
- More Christians were martyred in the 20th century than in all other centuries combined [christianity.com]

- It is claimed that 105,000 Christians are martyred for their faith each year [Deseret News, 2011]
 - Currently over 100 million Christians are being persecuted worldwide [Reuters, 2013]
 - 70 percent of the world's population lives in a religiously intolerant environment [Pew Forum, 2011]
- P. **Matthew 24:9** *Then they will deliver you (Christians) up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My (Jesus) name's sake."*
- Q. **Many Offended (vs. 10)**- "cause to stumble" The idea is that many will stumble and be offended by the Truth. Many will harden their hearts and trip over the truth of who Jesus is as Bridegroom, King, & Judge. There will be "*the great falling away*" as Paul describes (**2 Thes. 2:3**).
- R. As many are turning from the Truth of Jesus and the standard of His Word it is leading to a cultural shift of intolerance and hatred of Christians. As Jews were exposed and turned into the authorities during the Holocaust, it will be common in many regions across the earth before Jesus returns.
- S. **Many False Prophets (vs. 11)**- "Those who claim to speak for God but speak a false message" There will be an increase in a false gospel messages, leading many away from Jesus.
- T. **Increased Lawlessness (vs. 12)**- As cultures around the world cast off the boundaries and restraints of God's Word, lawlessness will increase. Violence, murder, suicide, terror, etc. will abound as people choose to live without any righteous boundaries. Love for God and for others will increase in many hearts.
- U. The generation who sees "*ALL of these things*" happening and coming to pass globally, know that you are the generation who will see the coming of Jesus.
- **Matthew 24:33-34**- "*So you also, when you see all these things, know that it (He/Jesus) is near—at the doors!*"³⁴ *Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.*
- V. After the characteristics are laid out before the Disciples, Jesus then says, "Don't be troubled/fearful." We must see Jesus' mercy and love in defining when He will return. HE IS RETURNING and He desires that we would be anticipating His coming like a love-sick Bride.
- W. Jesus explains what must happen first, before He returns (**Mt. 24:3-28**).
- X. We shall not and will not quit faithfully pursuing Jesus and calling others to Him. The great hope of the nations is Jesus and His gift of salvation from our sin and His eternal Kingdom coming. The mercy of God is to declare His name to the nations in salvation and worship.
- Y. **Matthew 24:13-14** "*But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*"¹⁴ *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*