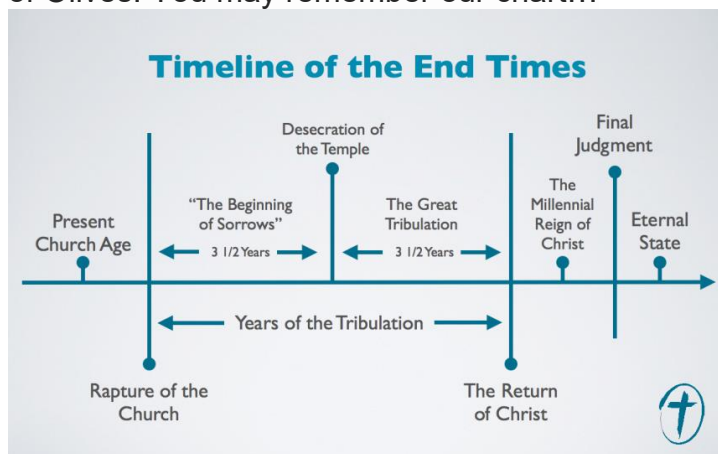


**Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 24, verse 15.**

It’s been a couple of Sundays since we’ve been together for our study of the Book of Matthew. Truly, we’ve had two fantastic weekends with the Passion Play and Easter. By the way...did you know we had 1,307 people come through here the weekend of the Passion Play and that was with having to cut the Sunday morning (early performance) because of the snow. We had dozens of hands raised for rededication and for salvation and then the next weekend we had around 435 who heard the Gospel in here prior to the Egg Hunt at the field and then Easter Sunday we had a total of 785 people here. Folks, that’s just shy of 2,500 people in two weekends pass through these doors! To God be the glory!

And so today, we return to our study of Matthew’s Gospel and the teaching of Jesus on the Mount of Olives. You may remember our chart...



Jesus has been teaching His disciples about what will be happening on the earth AFTER the Rapture of the Church and the “Present Church Age” ends. Jesus told His followers that there would come a season of time known as the TRIBULATION PERIOD of 7 years.

Truly, what His disciples were hearing on the hillside called the Mount of Olives must have seemed impossible. Jesus was describing to them tumultuous events that were beyond comprehension. How would they ever survive such a time... Because what He is describing is nothing short of terrifying. This morning we will see the “Rise of the Antichrist.”

**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.

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For centuries people have tried to guess who the Antichrist might be. I remember years ago reading where some thought the Antichrist was going to be, John F. Kennedy.

1960 Democratic National Convention

1960 presidential election



Nominees  
Kennedy and Johnson

**Convention**

Date(s)	July 11–15, 1960
City	Los Angeles, California
Venue	Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena

Why? Because at the 1960 Democratic Convention he was stuck at 666 electoral votes against challenger Lyndon Johnson. People were hoping Kennedy would get more votes and he did. He got 806 and Johnson got 409. Whew! Sigh of relief! Of course, that was ludicrous...well...this kind of thinking didn't end with President Kennedy...it moved on to this man:



Ronald Wilson Reagan. Why? Because there were six letters in each of his three names. 6 letters for Ronald, 6 letters for Wilson and 6 letters for Reagan. Folks, that's nuts too!

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Let me tell you why I think people think of Presidents or men with charismatic personalities like Kennedy and Reagan...it's because they know the Antichrist will have such a charm and charisma about him that people will almost swoon before him. Much like you see people fawning after sports stars and musicians.

Yet, behind that mask of charisma and charm will be a man who is the most diabolical, sick and twisted in his morals and thinking that will one day be exposed on the world and this will happen in an event known as the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION.

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**Turn with me to Daniel 9.** And as you are turning...let me remind you of what Jesus said to His followers...and the reason why we're turning to Daniel.

## Matthew 24:15

<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).

By the way...did you catch that phrase in the parenthesis? "LET THE READER UNDERSTAND." Jesus is saying this is all going to happen in the future...and Jesus is saying...the Bible (His Word) is going to still endure and be around during the Tribulation.

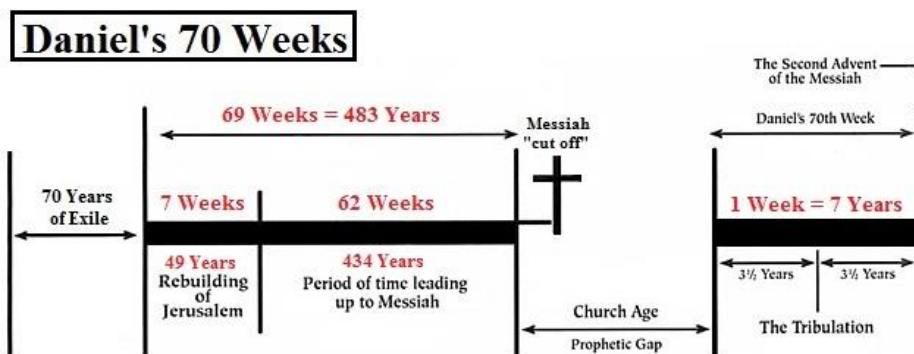
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## Daniel 9:24-27

"Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. <sup>25</sup> Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. <sup>26</sup> And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. <sup>27</sup> And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

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Take a look at this chart... It's called... Daniel's 70 Weeks and it's what we just read about...

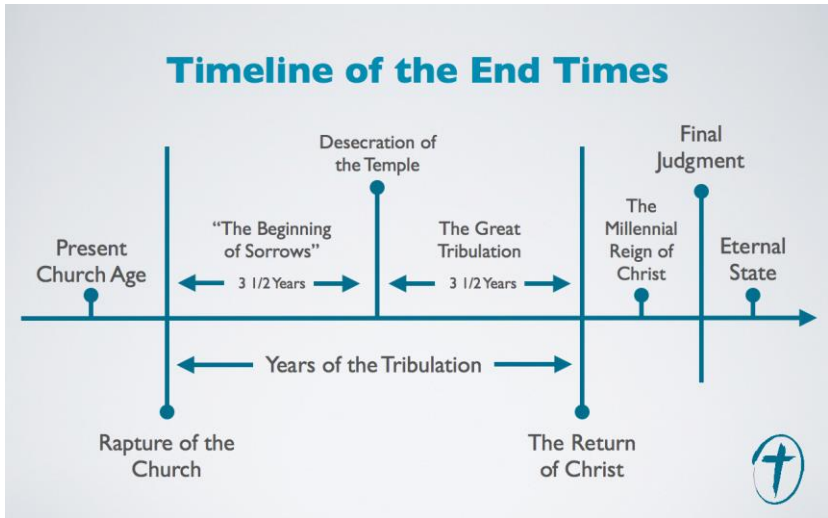


The people of God, the Nation of Israel were taken into captivity by the Babylonians for 70 years. After those 70 years, the people were allowed to come back and under Nehemiah, they rebuilt the city and the Temple. That was 69 weeks or 483 years, which led up to the coming of Jesus...the Messiah...but, at Jesus' death...the 70 weeks of the prophecy of Daniel stopped...one week short of completion. That Gap is known as the Church Age. But, when the Church is taken off the earth at the Rapture...the last week (Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week) will begin. This last "week" or 7 years will culminate with the return of Jesus to the earth...what we know as the Second Coming of Jesus.

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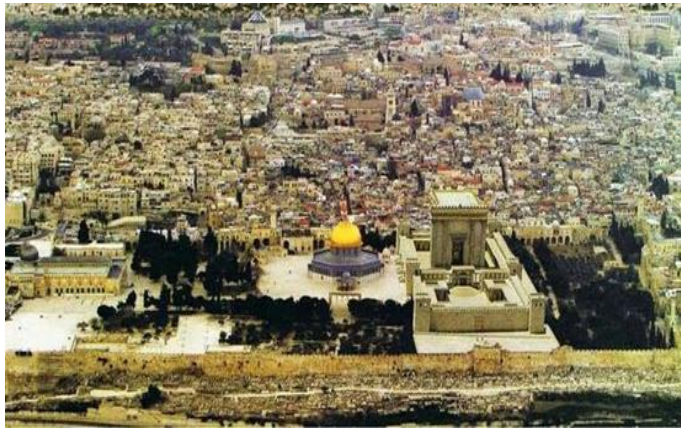
## Now go back with me to Matthew 24. We'll return to verse 15 in a moment.

As you are doing so, let me show you are chart again...



Notice in the middle of the 7 years is called: “The Desecration of the Temple” or some call it the “Abomination of Desolation.”

Now church I want you to understand what this Antichrist is going to do after millions...if not a couple of billion people disappear on the earth after the Rapture. He is going to come and bring stability and peace by calming everyone down. He will rise to power because he brokers a peace agreement with Israel and he allows the Temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem. And in order to broker peace with Israel, he will have to have power in the Arab/Muslim world. So, much so that he'll be able to do this...



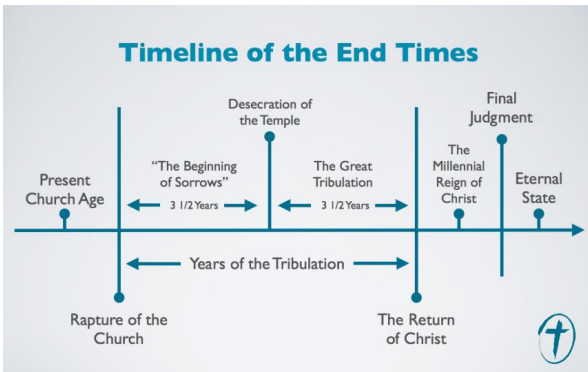
This is a depiction of the Temple Mount with a rebuilt Temple beside of the Dome of the Rock, the Muslim Mosque that is there now. In fact, some scholars say this could happen because they believe once access is given to the Israeli's again, they'll find that when measuring...they'll see the Holy of Holies and the Temple is not directly on top of the Dome of the Rock. I personally don't believe this. I believe the Dome of the Rock will have to be destroyed to rebuild the Temple. But, either way...the Antichrist will get it done and when he does the world will say...we've got to listen to that guy and follow him. And so, for the first 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation...there is relative peace.

And guess what starts back on the Temple mount...





The animal sacrifices...and the work of the Priests and the Levitical Order is restored. But, THEN...3 1/2 years into this deal...the Antichrist shows his true colors...



The Desecration of the Temple: The Abomination of Desolation. You see, Satan will finally be able to receive, (via the Antichrist), what he's always wanted: WORSHIP. And the Antichrist will demand everyone take the mark: 666 to be able to buy food, sell or trade anything. And if you don't, you could be killed on the spot. And it's this scene that Jesus says to His disciples 2,000 years ago...this is what you are to be looking for...the Antichrist says: "Worship me!!" Jesus says...get out of Judea! Get out of here!

### **Matthew 24:16**

**<sup>16</sup> then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.**

The word "flee" that's used there is the Greek word: "pheugo," which gives us the word: "fugitive." And criminals to this day still go to the mountains to flee the authorities and during the Tribulation, Jesus says...get to the mountains NOW!! Don't wait...

### **Matthew 24:17**

**<sup>17</sup> Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house.**

See this depiction of first century Jerusalem.



The houses were smashed together and they had flat roofs where folks would stay in the evenings because it was cooler. Jesus said, "If you here that this guy...the

Antichrist, has set up an image of himself in the Temple...don't even go down to the house...just go from roof to roof and get out! And WHAT IS more, JESUS said: the same is true if you're plowing in the field...

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### **Matthew 24:18-21**

<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.

Listen church family, once the Antichrist turns on the world, God begins to pour out His wrath on the world. That's Revelation 16 and the bowl judgments...remember them...the water turning to blood and massive sunburns, boils and painful sores for those who TOOK the Mark of the Beast and ultimately world-wide earthquakes that lead to massive tsunamis and 100 pound hailstones falling on people. It's horrible!

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In fact, it's so bad that Jesus says He will have mercy on those who are going to be saved during the Tribulation...which He calls the Elect.

### **Matthew 24:22**

<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.

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Remember, there are going to be two witnesses (Rev. 11, whom I believe are Moses and Elijah sent back for the task of sharing the Gospel), along with 144,000 Jews Rev. 7, who will be sealed and saved (protected) and set apart to spread the Gospel as well. And so, many will be saved and for the sake of them who are running and fleeing for their lives...this season won't last beyond the 3 ½ years.

And then Jesus says this to His people...guys...if you hear of people telling you that I've come...don't believe them... I won't be found on the earth...I'll be found coming in the sky.

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### **Matthew 24:23-28**

<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.

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Jesus sums up what He's saying with something that ever generation understands. What does this mean when you see it in the sky?



Death. Vultures are circling and this is awful! Listen at the end of this AWFUL TRIBULATION, Jesus is coming back to rescue the Elect...those who haven't taken the mark of the Beast and fled to the hills. He's going to extend once again His AMAZING GRACE!

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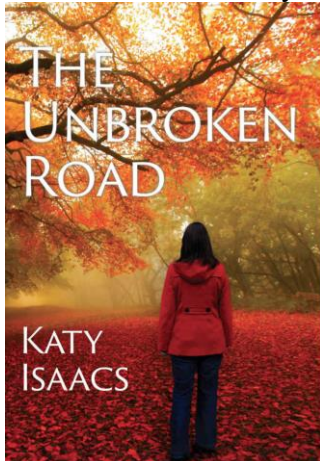
**Now I want you to go back to verse 15...the first one of our study...**

**Matthew 24:15**

<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),

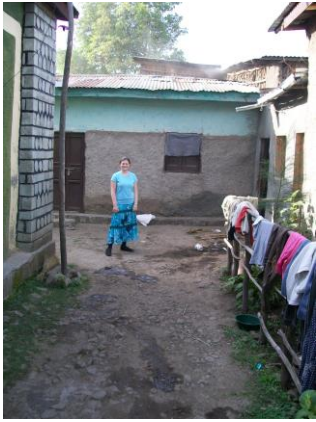
Let the reader understand... Listen...Jesus is here assuming that those who believe in Him will read the Bible. You see, if you really want to be able to survive this world? You better understand the Bible. You better be reading it... Truly it is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path...not only for those in the Tribulation, but for those of us now. And it brings peace and deliverance...even in this life. In fact, I've seen this happen in my life many times... Many times I've experienced the grace of God in my life over and over and I've experienced it EVEN WITH MY CHILDREN.

I want to close today by sharing an excerpt from Katy's book that she wrote a few years ago called:



In it she describes an experience we had together here...That is Alaba Kulito, Ethiopia. Katy is standing in front of the little room where we stayed and where I experienced the grace of God in a powerful way.

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I'm going to read you a section and then seek to tie it back to what we've seen today. To set the scene...I'm very, very sick...as sick as I can ever remember being and I'm hold up in this room...which I honestly thought might turn into my death chamber. Katy was worried sick and she's just come back from a long day of teaching in the villages outside of Alaba....

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### **Reading From Katy's Book:**

...I was anxious to know how Daddy was doing. The day had reached an uncomfortable temperature. I silently wished for a nice long shower. When I stepped into our room, the heat hit me like a wave. It was at least 90 degrees in the dark room. The tin roof was absorbing the sun's heat and causing the small room to heat up like an oven. My eyes eventually adjusted to the darkness. The room smelled of sickness. On the table by the bed sat two glass Sprite bottles and a bowl of soup. I asked Daddy how he was doing as I laid a damp cloth on his head. He weakly replied, "Not too good."

I nodded and turned away, trying to act calm. I had had enough. I felt a feeling I had never felt before. True loneliness. One could argue that I wasn't really alone. There were other team members just a house away. I wasn't really by myself, but nevertheless, it is impossible to explain how I felt...it was the darkest loneliness I had ever experienced. For just a few moments I leaned against the wall and let the fear take over. I was too weak to fight it, or so I thought.

*Daddy is dying.*

I kept trying to shake the thought, but it held fast. I pressed my palms to my eyes. Tears burned in my throat like fire.

*I am going to be here all alone. Daddy is going to die and I will be stuck here. He will never live through this.*

My incoherent mind ran wild. *Parasites. Daddy must have parasites. Or he could have picked up a remote African disease that his body can't fight off.* I remembered that my father had been born very premature. He had always struggled to get well from any sickness because of his weak immune system.

*What if this is too much for him?*

I literally felt my knees going weak. I looked at the clock on the small table beside the bed where dad lay motionless. I had about an hour before I had to go to the next village. I wanted to lie down... but where? The suitcases were stacked in the corner of the room. I pulled them out and



laid them side-by-side. The torture of fear surrendered long enough to give me some rest. I fell asleep.

I jolted awake at the creaking of the door. I sat up quickly. I completely expected to see Daddy's tall silhouette against the bright sunlight. Instead, a small woman entered. Two other women followed. My first thought was that they had accidentally entered the wrong room. Yet, when they looked at Daddy, they seemed confident that they were in the right place. I hopped up.

*"Daddy? We have some company."* I gently prodded Daddy awake.

Daddy sat up, as though it took every ounce of his strength. He didn't say a word.

I said hello to the ladies. They didn't even seem to notice me. They were just looking at the ceiling.

As the sun shown through the door they hadn't shut, I recognized their faces. These were some of the ladies from my Daddy's class he had been teaching.

One of the women's voices broke through the silence. It was a rich, melodious sound. It was a sound that I will never forget. Her face was wet with tears and turned to heaven. She grabbed at her skirt. That was when I noticed their skirts. Color began to swirl. The long colorful skirts spun as the first lady prayed. She was praying for Daddy. It was as though she were looking into the very face of God. She moved and swayed as she prayed. Her hands raised; she cried out in Amharic. The other two women did the same. They spread out across the small room. I stood out of their way as they swirled, prayed and cried.

This was faith. This was prayer. This was the absence of fear. This was the grace of God. I let the tears roll down my face. I didn't bow my head. I raised it to heaven as they did. Daddy sat on the bed. The sickness was so strong that he didn't even acknowledge what was happening. They may have been praying for him, but I was the one who experienced the presence of God. I was the one who felt the peace. I wondered for a moment if it was a dream. But it wasn't. It was too good to be just a dream.

The women slowly quieted down and let their skirts fall limp. They each looked once more at my daddy and said something to heaven. And as quickly as they had come... they were gone.

My whole mindset changed. Those ladies had been the hands of God, reaching in to give me hope and peace. A song came to my mind. It was a new song, one that God had given to me. I scribbled down the words and promised Jesus to write that song one day.

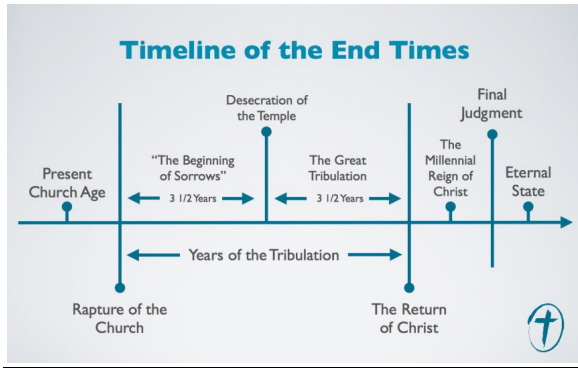
*You're Enough for Me  
When tears are my offering  
Or When Joy is My Song*

Daddy began to recover almost immediately. It took him several days to get strong, yet he was able to continue teaching the next day.

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Church family...Katy and I experienced the amazing grace of God. He delivered us. Listen, Jesus has made plans to get us out of here...to deliver us...He has shown us the way...The Rapture...

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It's the Age of GRACE...Have you chosen to receive Him? If you will, He will deliver you out of death... He will protect you from the tribulation to come by delivering you. Yes, Jesus is coming back...and the vultures are circling...



Death is coming for those who reject Him! Choose Him now and accept His amazing grace and be delivered from all of that is to come!