



## The Last Days Series - Part 2

Pastor Christopher Miller - August 9, 2020

Why should the Christian be concerned about End Time Bible Prophecy and the Return of Christ? Because the Disciples themselves were concerned about this worrisome topic in Matthew chapter 24. We discussed verses 1 through 14 regarding the expectations of the Church leading up to the Rapture and the beginning of the Tribulation Period. But in all of this calamity that we see, where do we take refuge in Hope? Where do we find encouragement for our Faith? We should take comfort in the fact that Christ is coming for His Church! But just because He is going to return does not mean that we sit in our padded pews and do nothing until He returns!

In the first-century Church, they looked earnestly towards the Return of the Christ and believed strongly in the Saviors return. They would have been silly to greet each other with the word “maranatha” which means “Our Lord, Comes!” if they did not believe in His imminent return. They lived nearly 2,000 years ago, and yet they seem to have had a deeper awareness of Imminency of Christ’s Return than many of today's Christians. **2 Peter 3:1-7**, the Apostle Peter addresses those who scoff at the teachings of the Lord’s Return.

Listen to the words of the Apostle Peter, **“This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,<sup>2</sup> that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, <sup>3</sup>knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. <sup>4</sup>They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” <sup>5</sup>For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, <sup>6</sup>and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. <sup>7</sup>But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.”**

Notice the quote that the Apostle Peter provides for context of those who scoff, **“Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”** Scoffers are lifting up their voice against the Return of Christ in our present day in the same way they did against Noah before the rain began to fall. “There’s no judgment coming!” They cried against Noah! “You are just trying to scare us! It’s never rained on the Earth like you are prophesying; you are a false prophet. A kook! Why are you building a boat in the middle of a field with no water in sight?”

Everyone thought Noah was insane until rain began to fall from the sky and one hundred years of preaching and prophesying began to ring in the ears of those who had listened to Noah preach and prophesy of a coming destruction upon the Earth; all the while never giving up on building the Ark. Many may ask, “Pastor, why are you striving to build a church? Why are you so willing to spend your life building something such as this? Are you expecting something to happen?”

And here is my answer... Like Noah, I am building an Ark of Safety! I am building something that will save the lives of those who will hear my words today because it is the Lord who commissioned that His Church be built and established in the Earth. And like the hearers of Noah’s preaching, they did not realize just how necessary the Ark was until the rain came.

And like many of you, you did not realize just how important being a part of a church was until all of the calamity that broke loose in our world in the last 6 months and the last 100 years of Bible Prophecy preaching began to ring in our all of our ears! The rain is coming!

Jesus declared in **Matthew 24:36-39**, “**But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.** <sup>37</sup> **But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.** <sup>38</sup> **For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,** <sup>39</sup> **and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”**

Signs are everywhere! Like Peter wrote in 2 Peter chapter 3, **you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles!**

Like a pregnant woman beginning to experience birth pains which signals to the mother that the day is ever more approaching that she will give birth, we are experiencing birth pains in the earth and even the non-believer can sense that something is going on; things are not normal; all is not well in the world. I am going to talk more about the Days of Noah next Sunday.

Some may ask, “Pastor, why are you preaching about this subject topic right now? Are you trying to scare people with these teachings about the last days and all this talk of calamity and the Antichrist?”

I'm going to use the Word of God to explain why I feel that it is absolutely necessary for me to address this subject during this time. In the Book of Ezekiel chapter 33, Ezekiel the Prophet receives a sobering commission from the Lord regarding Ezekiel's position and purpose in the earth.

Listen to these words found in Ezekiel 33:1-9, "33 The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>2</sup>"Son of man, speak to your people and say to them, If I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and make him their watchman, <sup>3</sup> and if he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people, <sup>4</sup> then if anyone who hears the sound of the trumpet does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. <sup>5</sup> He heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life. <sup>6</sup> But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, that person is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand. <sup>7</sup> "So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me.

<sup>8</sup>If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. <sup>9</sup>But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.”

Ezekiel was chosen by the Lord to be a watchman for the House of Israel and to protect the people by giving insight and forewarning of things to come; as well as correction and discipline to the house.

Remember the words noted in verse 2, “If I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and make him their watchman,” In January of this year, this great house elected me as the Shepherd of this house and I bear this responsibility proudly and with sobriety.

The burden of leadership comes in many forms and one of those forms is addressing hard topics, diving into the deep thing of God, and teaching the whole council of the Word with boldness and without fear. And as the Pastor and Watchman of this house, I am here to warn you, to give you some prophetic insight of what is currently happening, and prophetic foresight into what is yet to come according to the Bible.

I am not here to scare you nor to use fear as a means to manipulate you nor to drive an agenda. I am here today to teach you the Word of God and to provide insight of what is and what is to come.

And bottom line, if I don't deliver to you what the Lord has delivered to me as He gave it to me then I will be held responsible for your lives because your blood will be on my hands due to the fact that I did not tell you the truth; that I did not sound the trumpet in the land. Remember what I said last Sunday, I am not the Candyman; I'm not going to help you make the world taste good. And the study of Bible Prophecy helps us to keep the main thing as the main thing and to not lose our focus on eternity. Remember that this life is but a vapor...

Last Sunday I addressed the expectations of the Church during the end times... And if you missed the Message last Sunday then I strongly encourage you to go back and watch it. Every Sunday, I will be building upon the prior Sunday so it would be prudent for you to be in attendance, whether on-campus or on-line, to stay current with the series. Today I am going to be diving into Verses 15-22 to discuss the Abomination of Desolation that Jesus prophesied about!

Remember, if Jesus prophesied the destruction of the temple and it happened just as He said it would when Titus marched on Jerusalem in 70AD, then the words that follow that text picking up in Matthew 24:15 forward lends to the fact that if His previous words came to pass as He said then His following words will come to pass as He said!

Remember that the Bible says that the Word of the Lord will not return unto Him void and empty but rather that His Words will accomplish that which He sent them forth to do. **The Gospel of Saint Matthew 24:15-22 records the Words of Christ addressing The Abomination of Desolation. Verse 15 says...**

**15 “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, 18 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 19 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. 21 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. 22 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.”**

So let's dissect this passage of Scripture because there is a lot to cover to fully bring this passage of text, verses 15-22, into its fullness of understanding. So let's cover some Bible Prophecy and some History to establish a point of reference.



In verses 15–16, Jesus said, “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

When Jesus used the phrase, “let the reader understand”, what was He referring to in the Book of Daniel and was there a historical reference to this that happened as well that as a type and shadow? There are both interestingly enough. Daniel prophesied about this in his apocalyptic prophecies found in Daniel chapter 12 of the times of the end and Jewish History records the actions of a King by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes that can be looked at as a type and shadow of the actions that the Anti-Christ will commit which is found both in John’s Book of the Revelation and in Daniel’s Prophecy of the End Times.

Dr. R.C. Sproul, a great American Theologian, noted the following as a historical outline of Antiochus Epiphanes, “In 168 BC, the Greek king Antiochus IV Epiphanes invaded Jerusalem and captured the city. He marched into the Jewish temple, erected a statue of the Greek god Zeus, and sacrificed a pig on the altar of incense. This provoked a revolt in Judea as the Jews fought to remove Antiochus’ sacrilege from the temple.

Under the leadership of the Maccabees, the Jews drove Antiochus and his army out, and the Jews gained control of their land for about one hundred years until Pompey, an acclaimed Roman general, captured the Holy Land and brought it under Roman rule.

Many ancient Jews viewed the actions of Antiochus Epiphanes as the fulfillment of Daniel 9:27, which says, “On the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate.” However, the time frame in verses 24–27 begins with the decree of Cyrus that sent the Jews back to their land after the exile (Ezra 1).

This makes it impossible that Daniel’s prophecy refers to Antiochus Epiphanes. The year 186 BC was far too early to fit the prophecy—but the year AD 70 was not. In that year, the Roman general Titus invaded Jerusalem to crush a Jewish revolt, entered the temple, had the building destroyed, and carried off the lampstand and other temple artifacts to Rome.

It seems incontrovertible that Titus’ actions were the specific fulfillment of Jesus’ warning in Mark 13:14 about the “abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be.” After all, the parallel verse in Matthew 24:15 says that the abomination would stand in “the holy place,” a clear reference to the temple. Christ told the disciples that when they saw the abomination, they were to flee the city.

They were not to return from the field for their possessions if they were out working the crops. If they were on the roof of their home, they were not to enter the home before fleeing; rather, they were to scurry down the outdoor staircases (most houses in Judea had flat roofs that people accessed via an outdoor staircase) and flee. The flight would be so perilous that winter travel would be difficult and pregnant women would find it hard to keep up (Mark 13:14-20).

Josephus, the Jewish historian who gives us the clearest first-hand account of Jerusalem's fall, reports that the Jewish Christians in Judea heeded Jesus' warning. When the city and temple fell, more than one million Jews died. But Jewish Christians, by and large, were not among them, for they had already fled the city when they saw the Romans coming." (End of R.C. Sproul)

In light of the previous quote from R.C. Sproul, he and I disagree on one point regarding Titus and Matthew 24:15. Both Titus and Antiochus Epiphanes stood in the temple but these men are not what Jesus and Daniel were referring to. According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, Titus entered the temple when it was set ablaze but ultimately withdrew due to the flames. Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the Temple with the blood of a pig, which is an unkosher animal, and Titus burned it down but Daniel's prophecy spoke of something far worse than what these two men did.

Even Jesus made it clear that this event that He was referencing to that would happen would be the worst thing that has ever happened in the earth. Remember the Words of Christ, “21 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. 22 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.”

So with the Words of Jesus in mind, it is not possible that Titus’s attack on Jerusalem is what Jesus was referring to in Matthew 24:15 because Jesus makes it clear that this act by the “Abomination of Desolation” will be such a terrible time that such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now nor never will be. Matthew 24:1-2 speaks to Titus’ attack on Jerusalem but Christ’s prophecy in Matthew 24:15 is at a different time and is far far worse. Jesus and Daniel are speaking of a catastrophic future event indeed. Let’s see what Daniel said about this in the Scripture.

Daniel chapter 12:1-13 “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above;[a] and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. 4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

5 Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. 6 And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream,[b] “How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?” 7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished. 8 I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, “O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?” 9 He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. 10 Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand. 11 And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. 12 Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days. 13 But go

your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.”

Now, let's dig a little deeper here, Jesus said in Matthew 24:15-16, “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

The abomination of desolation is not the acts of Titus or Antiochus Epiphanes; the abomination of desolation is committed by the Antichrist in the middle of the seven years of tribulation found in the Book of the Revelation. Now how can I say that and be Biblically accurate.

First off, the reference of Christ in Matthew 24:15 is referring to the fact that what Jesus is prophesying about is the very thing that Daniel prophesied; they are one in the same. Jesus is correlating His prophetic declaration with the reference point of Daniel in Daniel chapter 12. Both Daniel and Jesus are prophesying about the same thing and Jesus is emphasizing His prophetic declaration with a reference point.

Secondly, Daniel and Jesus both are prophesying about a future event. If Daniel's prophecy was about Antiochus Epiphanes then why would Jesus be prophesying about a future event with reference to an event that has already happened? Again, both Daniel's prophecy and Jesus' prophecy are about a future event.

Both Jesus and Daniel make this clear in their own words with references to the end of time, the end of days, and that the tribulation of that time being the worst ever in human history.

Thirdly, notice a key part of Jesus' statement in verse 15, "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place! That last part is the key... standing in the holy place. PAUSE.

When Daniel prophesied about this in Daniel chapter 12, there wasn't a temple in existence. Jerusalem was in ruin. There was not a temple to stand in. The Jews were in exile from Israel and under captivity to the Babylonian Empire under King Nebuchadnezzar. So it's kind of hard to stand in a temple that doesn't exist and commit an act in a place that doesn't exist; seems reasonable right?

Also, Jesus prophesied the destruction of Herod's Temple but then says that the one who would commit the Abomination of the Desolation would stand in the Holy Place. Which clearly denotes the fact that the Temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt; I will circle back to this point in a few minutes.

The second half of this point is that Jesus made it clear that His prophetic declaration was a future event in Matthew 24:21-22, **21 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. 22 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.”**

Again both prophecies are in reference to a future event yet to come with such great tribulation in the earth that has never been seen from the beginning of human history up until that point nor will there ever be anything this bad to ever happen again once it has happened.

It’s going to be so bad that if the time frame during which this will happen had not been shortened then no human would have been saved. This is in reference to the Seven Years of Tribulation found in the Book of the Revelation and the Antichrist is the center piece of this period of time.

Fourthly, these prophecies are explicitly about the end of the age and Daniel is clear of this fact in Daniel 12 when he wrote in verse 1, **“At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.”** Notice the overlap of the Words of Jesus in Matthew 24:21-22 that we just read a moment ago and the Words of Daniel in Daniel 12:1.



He continues on to say in verse 4, “**But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.**” He then repeats this point again in verse 9, “<sup>9</sup>He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.” <sup>10</sup>Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly.”

If the Bible repeats the same thing three times in the span of one chapter then that repeating is important. This repetitiveness brings great emphasis because Daniel is trying to drive the point home that what he is talking about will be at the end of days. And if Christ is using Daniel’s prophecy as a reference point to lend clarity and correlation to His prophecy about the Abomination of Desolation then Daniel’s references to the end of days means that Christ’s prophesy and reference is about the end of days as well.

Fifthly, both Daniel and Jesus are talking about the Anti-Christ because of the numbers annotated in the Bible. Hang out with me here and listen carefully; this is really interesting. Daniel said in **Daniel 12:11** **And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.**” 1,290 days. How many days? 1,290 days. How many days are in a year? 365. 1,290 days divided by 365 equals 3.5 (3 and ½)

In Daniel 9:27, Daniel wrote, “<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.”

Now let me connect a dot here that we will dive deeper into in the next few weeks. In Daniel’s prophecy, he talks about a week (7 days). In the Book of the Revelation, John talks about 7 years of tribulation. Bible Prophecy Scholars agree that the 7 years noted by John is the same principle of Daniel’s 1 week (7 Days) though two separate books, these references are the same premise. Daniel said that, “<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.” Half of the week is 3.5 (7 divided by 2)

So for 3 and a ½ years, there will be sacrifices and offerings and then he shall put an end to it at the end of the 3 and ½ year period; half of the week. Again, 7 days divided in half is 3.5 days (3 and ½ years)

A covenant for one week which equals to seven days and half way through that week is 3 and ½ days; at the 3 and ½ mark, the Antichrist will violate his covenant and go to war. In Daniel 7:25, Daniel noted this of the Antichrist, “He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.”

Notice the last part of this verse, “and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.” A time, times and half time. Time equals 1, Times equals 2, and half time is  $\frac{1}{2}$ .  $1 + 2 + \frac{1}{2} = 3 \frac{1}{2}$ . Notice how 3 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  keeps on popping up?

Are you ready to go deeper? John the Revelator noted in Revelation 13:4-5, “<sup>4</sup>And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?” <sup>5</sup>And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.” Forty-two months. Forty-Two Months equals 3.5 years.  $42 \text{ months} / 12 \text{ months} = 3.5 \text{ years}$ .

So let's piece this all together, the Antichrist rises up in the earth at the beginning of the tribulation period and 3 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  years into the tribulation period he breaches his covenant or treaty that he has generated. We will discuss more about this covenant that he makes more at a later time. Daniel and Jesus both prophesied this and they are both talking about the same thing and the same person. 1,290 Days - Daniel 12, A week and violates the covenant in the middle of the week - Daniel 9, a time, times and half a time - Daniel 7, and 42 Months - Revelation 13. All equal to the same number - 3.5

But it is the rising up of the Antichrist on the timeline of Bible Prophecy that gives us an insight of the how the timeline of the end times will unfold. In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, the Apostle Paul records the following by the leading of the Holy Spirit, “Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, <sup>2</sup>not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. <sup>3</sup>Let no one deceive you in any way. (Sound familiar; Jesus said those very words in Matthew 24:4, “See that no one leads you astray.”) For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, <sup>4</sup>who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. <sup>5</sup>Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? <sup>6</sup>And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. <sup>7</sup>For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. <sup>8</sup>And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. <sup>9</sup>The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, <sup>10</sup>and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

<sup>11</sup>Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, <sup>12</sup>in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Now I want to point a few things out in this chapter of 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians and connect it back to Matthew 24 which records the words of Jesus. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 records, “For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, <sup>4</sup>who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.” Notice the last statement of Paul regarding the Antichrist, “so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.”

Also, in this chapter of 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul gives us insight into what will happen to the Church and how powerful we are in the Earth leading up to the end of days in verse 6-7... “<sup>6</sup>And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. <sup>7</sup>For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.” And you know what is restraining him.. Who is the “him” that Paul is referring to? This restrainer prohibits the Antichrist and the Antichrist Spirit from being let loose into the world. Who is the “what” in this verse that is restraining the Antichrist?

The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is the restrainer holding back the Antichrist spirit from being let loose in the earth. Notice the words of Paul at the end of verse 7, “Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.” Notice the reference to the one who restrains but will eventually be taken out of the way. The Church is currently the only force in the World that has the power to restrain and stand in the way of the Antichrist Spirit that is seeking to ravage the World.

I’ve heard those who say that the “he” referred to here is the Holy Spirit but this can’t be the case because the Holy Spirit was sent into the World to empower the Saints of God, The Church, to have power in the earth to wage war against the devil. The Church needs the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit needs the Church. The Church needs Power and Power needs a conduit to flow through to accomplish its mission.

The Church who now restrains the spirit of Antichrist will do so until the Church is raptured out of the Earth before the Tribulation Period begins and the Antichrist will rise to power in the Earth over a three and a half year period by making treaties and unifying the world due to the calamity that is coming upon the earth during the breaking of the seals and the judgments that are explain in Revelation chapters 6-12.

With that said, remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:15, “15 “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),” Jesus said that when you see the Abomination of Desolation, the Antichrist, standing in the holy place of the temple that those who see this must flee to the mountains because this is a bad omen to the earth! This will take place at the 3 and ½ year mark into the Tribulation Period.

Paul said that the Antichrist will seat himself in the Temple of God and proclaim himself to be God committing the Abomination of Desolation 2 Thessalonians 2:4! The Antichrist will seat himself in the Holy Place of the temple that the Nation of Israel will be rebuilding on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem at a point in the near future and will proclaim himself to be God. This will be the ultimate act of Blasphemy that will have ever been committed on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem; Titus and Antiochus Epiphanes’ acts will pale in comparison.

Daniel 12:11 notes, “11 And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.” Important point here; it’s impossible to offer regular burnt offerings if there is no temple to do so.

In 2011, my wife and I went to Israel and we had the opportunity to stop into the Temple Institute in Jerusalem to look at the golden Menorah as well as the garments for the priests to wear, etc. It's an amazing place and if you are ever in Israel, you absolutely have to go there.

During our tour of the facility, I asked the curator the following question, "If you guys were able to begin construction of the Temple right now today with modern technology, how long would it take to build it?" Without batting an eye, the curator responded and I was absolutely floored. She looked at me and said matter-of-factly, "Three and a half years exactly". You could have knocked me over with a feather. 3 and ½ years to build the temple. This explains why Daniel said for 3 and a ½ years, there will be sacrifices and offerings and then the Antichrist shall put an end to it at the end of the 3 and ½ year period.

Paul said that the Antichrist will take a seat in the Temple of God and proclaim himself to be God. Jesus said that when you see the Abomination of Desolation standing in the Holy Place that folks need to flee for safety. Daniel said that the Antichrist would broker a treaty and violate the tenants of that treaty in the middle of the week; 3.5.

The Temple will be rebuilt within a period of time of 3 and ½ years per what I was told at the Temple Institute and it is my firm belief that the Antichrist will play a hand in brokering the deal between the Jews and Muslims concerning the temple mount in so that the Jewish Temple can be



rebuilt. We will dive deeper into this within the next few weeks when we discuss the Book of Revelation as well as Psalms 83 and Ezekiel 38 and 39.

To continue on with our original text, Jesus continues to give us insight into this period of time in **Matthew 24:23-28**, “**23 Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 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. 27 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. 28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.”**

Simply put, the Return of Christ to the Earth is not going to be a hidden thing in an inner room or in a desert place. Like lightning flashes across the sky and everyone sees it, so will Christ’s Return be! The whole Earth will behold His return at His Second Advent!

Remember, the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Christ are two separate events: the Rapture takes place before the 7 years of tribulation, the restrainer is taken out of the way so that the Antichrist Spirit can ravage the Earth. The Second Coming of Christ is noted in Revelation Chapter 19 to establish His Millennial Reign in the Earth.

Jesus gives us a little nugget of insight again with his reference to signs of the times. Vultures gathering are a sign of death. Lights flashing in the heavens is a sign of lightning. Signs give insight into what otherwise we would not have any insight to. The rise of false Christs, false prophets, false signs and false wonders which will manifest to lead people astray even the elect if possible.

False Christs lead us into false religions, False Prophets lead us into false teaching, and false signs and wonders lead us into apostate movements that are not of God.

This is why we can't fall into the trap of chasing signs, wonders and miracles; this is why we can't fall in to the trap of chasing prophetic words. Prophets of God are not Psychics. If we do not study our Bible and know what the Word of God says then we will fall prey to these false manifestations of power; they are being manifest of a spirit but it is not the Holy Spirit.

If a prophet begins to function as a psychic then he or she has a spirit but it is not the Holy Spirit. If a prophet prophesies something that contradicts the Word of God then he or she is "prophe-lying" and they have a Spirit of Divination. If a Preacher or Minister begins to refer to him or herself as being deified or so super spiritual that they are untouchable then they are operating in error and fallen in to the sin of the devil.

Acts 13:4-12 gives us a perfect example of a “religious leader” who is who is seeking to use his influence to lead people astray. The Bible records, “<sup>4</sup>So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. <sup>5</sup>When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. <sup>6</sup>When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. <sup>7</sup>He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. <sup>8</sup>But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. <sup>9</sup>But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him <sup>10</sup>and said, “You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? <sup>11</sup>And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time.” Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. <sup>12</sup>Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.”

In closing, (Pastor Brad if you will come) a religious leader who uses his or her position to manipulate people for their own personal gain or to appropriate influence for the sake of misleading people from a righteous standard is a son of the devil and an enemy of all righteousness. They are full of deceit and villainy and make the Paths of the Lord crooked. Why am I addressing this? Because we are living in the last days and Jesus warned us of these things to be aware of.

We have to understand that there is such an infatuation regarding the end times because people want to know what is going to be happening in the world around them, and I understand that. However, we are making a huge mistake if we think that everything will be great within the confines of the Church but will be terrible in the World.

If everything was going to be great in the Church then why is Jesus addressing false prophets, false christs, false signs and miracles and wonders? Those are not problems in the world, those are problems within the Church. Which denotes the fact there is going to be great difficulty both within the Church and within the World leading up to the Time of Tribulation.

Now I want to be abundantly clear! I firmly believe in the laying on of hands, I firmly believe in the prayer for the sick, I firmly believe in signs, wonders and miracles and I firmly believe that there are those who operate in the manifestation of spiritual gifts as the Holy Ghost leads them.

This is basic New Testament doctrine and teaching and this is why we as an Assembly of God Church, we fully embrace Pentecostal Expression.

I also firmly know that there are phonies, I firmly know that there are so called “prophets” who sell prophetic words, I firmly know that there are self-appointed Apostles who demand financial payment for “spiritual covering”, And I firmly know that these people who practice such things are going to bust Hell wide open. They are an enemy of the Cross of Christ!

Here me clearly, anyone who uses their spiritual position of leadership within a church or religious institution to manipulate people, mislead people, or lie to people for the sake of personal gain, whether it be financial or otherwise, is in danger of eternal judgment.

“Well Pastor, that’s some strong statements there. I thought we were not supposed to Judge people.” Notice with me in the Book of Acts 8:14-24, and I will show you what happens when people in the church try to use the giftings of God for personal gain “<sup>14</sup>Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John,<sup>15</sup> who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, <sup>16</sup>for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup>Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup>Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup>saying, “Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I

lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”<sup>20</sup> But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!<sup>21</sup> You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.<sup>22</sup> Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.<sup>23</sup> For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.”<sup>24</sup> And Simon answered, “Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.””

This text is a perfect example of why we must be careful of chasing signs and wonders and miracles because some folks are the real deal and others are sorcerers; this is why you need to know the Word of God and be filled with the Power of the Holy Spirit so you can discern the Spirit of a man to see if he is of Christ. So many get caught up in the whirlwind of religious experiences and they run from revival to revival looking for a word from somebody; looking for a sign or a wonder. Because you are more concerned with an experience than you are with the burden of relationship. Jesus said in **Matthew 12:39**, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign...” Stop Seeking A Sign and Start Seeking Him!

If the Holy Spirit causes you to run, shout and speak in tongues, but He doesn't control your life, your tongue and cause you to live right then you have a spirit but it's not the Holy Spirit! Remember, there are two spirits in the earth, a Holy one and an anti-holy one.

Which spirit do you have? Are you participating with the spirit of this world? Are you entertaining the spirits of this age or are you walking in the Power of the Holy Spirit? Only you can answer that question. But the bottom line today is this, Jesus is coming!

Jesus made it clear in the Gospel of John 3:3, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “Well pastor, I know that God loves me”, yes but are you born again? “Well I know John 3:16”, yes but are you born again? “Well I come to church”, yes but are you born again? I am not asking what you know; I am asking you if the rapture happened at this very moment, would you make the Heavenly trip? Would I see you at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb? Or would you be left behind? This is not fear mongering; this is a sincere question. Are you ready for the Rapture of the Church?

When you are truly born again, there is an inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit. Romans 8:16-17 states, “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.” When you are born again there is going to be an inner witness in your Spirit that you are born again; as the old mothers of the church used to say, “You will know in your knower!”

My friends... Jesus is coming and He is coming soon... Are you ready?

## Altar Call:

1. You do not know the lord!
2. You walked with the Lord at one time but you've backslid; it's time to rededicate your life to Christ today!