

# The Second Coming- Part 1 - Introduction

## Matthew 24

**OPENING ILLUSTRATION:** As you know I love the people of Cuba. I love the city of Havana. I love the culture there. What a great place to visit. God is doing a great work in that nation. One of the things I remember from my first visit was seeing men argue. Cuban Spanish is like other kinds of Spanish, but LOUDER. Well as I got closer, I discovered that almost inevitably they would be arguing about baseball. Cubans are huge fans of Baseball.

Well if you heard two men arguing in first century Israel you could almost count on the fact that they would be arguing about Eschatology. Eschatology is a big word that simply means the END TIMES. Eschatology was to the first century Jews what baseball is to the Cubans. They all had their opinions and they felt them strongly.

The most common writings of the day were **Apocalyptic** in nature.

So not only did they have the Biblical writings of the Prophets that told them what they could expect like Daniel, Zechariah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. They also had many non biblical books that captured the essence of Hebrew thought about the last days.

For example, there was the **Book of Enoch**, there is the **Psalms of Solomon**, and there is the **Assumption of Moses**, the **Book of Jubilees**, the **Ascension of Isaiah**, the **Fourth Book of Ezra**, the **Apocalypse of Baruch**, and the **Book of the Secrets of Enoch**, the **Sibylline Oracles**, various religious books, revealed they're not God-written, they revealed the thinking of the Jews.

One of the modern books that capsulated the thinking of the Jews as it related to the last days is written by a man by the name of **Emil Schurer**. The book is entitled, "***The History of the Jewish People in the Time of Christ.***"

In that series of books Schurer describes the average Hebrews eschatology as expecting.

1. A breakdown of Morality
2. A Time of Intense Suffering
3. A Preacher coming in the Spirit of Elijah
4. The Coming of Messiah
5. A great war against Messiah
6. Messiah would Achieve a Victory against the Nations
7. Jerusalem would be rebuilt and reestablish
8. Messiah would usher in a time of unprecedented peace and prosperity

That is what they expected to happen. So think about their context - About 175 years earlier the Greek King of the Seleucid Empire **Antiochus Epiphanies** had conquered Israel as predicted by the Prophet Daniel. Then the **Romans** conquered Israel in **64BC**. Ultimately they sat up an Edomite puppet King in **Herod the Great**. So in the mind of the average Jew - **this was a time of great distress**. They yearned for Messiah to come and restore the Kingdom of David.

Then remember what happens? **John the Baptist** comes on the scene preaching, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"... meaning, you can reach out and touch it... it's that close!

Then he points to Jesus and says **THAT IS THE LAMB OF GOD**. He declares Jesus as the **Messiah**.

So in the mind of the Jews - this is wonderful... they assume Messiah would take over, war would break out, but Messiah would lead Israel to victory and begin the reestablishment of Jerusalem and a time of peace and prosperity. **THIS IS IT**.

NOW - the NT tells us that there was a **great mystery** hidden from the OT - this **Church age** where people of every nation would hear the Gospel and many would believe. This is not clear in the OT. It is eluded to... but not explicitly taught. That's why Paul calls it a mystery. They expected everything to happen **at one time**.

***Let me show you an example of this:***

**The Prophet Isaiah writes in Isaiah 61:1–2 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;

He goes on to describe the ***rebuilding of Jerusalem and the ushering in of peace***.

Well in **Luke 4:16–21 (ESV)** we are told that Jesus...

<sup>16</sup> ...came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." <sup>20</sup> And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup> And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

***He stops short of the day of vengeance, and the restoration of Jerusalem...*** why? Because in the first coming he would fulfill part of Isaiah's prophecy. The second part would be fulfilled in a second coming.

Thus, Jesus coming is in two part - His first Advent as the ***lamb of God*** who takes away the sin of the world... and His second coming as the ***Lion of the Tribe of Judah*** who Judges his enemies and sets up His eternal throne.

**With that CONTEXT in mind - look with me at Matthew 23:37**

- On **Sunday** he made his Triumphal entry into Jerusalem. (Hosanna's, Palm Branches)
- On **Monday**, he cleansed the Temple and Cursed the Fig Tree
- Now On **Tuesday**, the Pharisees launch their final attack before they call for crucifixion.
- Jesus has just given his final **public** sermon of condemnation of the Pharisees.

**He closed that sermon with the words of Matthew 23:37–39 (ESV)**

<sup>37</sup> “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

*Now Jesus says one of the most shocking things He has said up to this point to a Jewish audience.*

**Matthew 23:38–39 (ESV)** <sup>38</sup> See, your house is left to you desolate.

*He’s speaking of the Temple - remember at times he called it My House, at times he called it My Father’s House... but here he says it’s YOUR house.*

<sup>39</sup> For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”

*Notice how Jesus mentions the **destruction of the temple**... and he mentions **his coming** in the same verse.*

**Matthew 24:1–2 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple.

**Mark tells us in 13:1** <sup>1</sup> ...**one of His disciples** said to Him, “Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!”

*The foundation stones to the temple were HUGE some over 85ft, solid cut stone! The temple itself was overlaid with gold. It was a magnificent place more like a grand fortress than a temple. The Disciple was saying, “Jesus do you realize you said that this would be left desolate?”*

<sup>2</sup> But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

*So Jesus predicts the destruction of Herod’s temple... that happened in 70AD so note here at this point he has not begun his sermon or rehearsing the signs of his coming yet. Some see the signs Jesus will give as describing the time period of 70AD, but these are two separate prophecies.*

Now Jesus leaves the city, **Matthew 24:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> 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?”

The word, “coming” there in the Greek is the word **Parousia**. It means coming in fullness. NOW REMEMBER - They didn’t separate a 1st and 2nd coming. So they are not anticipating Jesus leaving for thousands of years. They are expecting Jesus to give them an answer like, within a couple of months, or weeks, or days. **Parousia** means, when will you unveil your deity and take over?

Matthew 24-25 Jesus is basically to say - **NOT NOW**. He's revealing to them the gap, the mystery.

The verses that follow are the longest answer Jesus gave to any question. They are straightforward. They are not viewed in hyperbole or parable.

Jesus describes in detail the generation of His Parousia... that we know to be His second coming.

#### **FOUR THINGS THAT YOU NEED TO CONSIDER AS WE BEGIN THIS STUDY:**

### **1. The signs will Suddenly Increase in Frequency and Intensity.**

**Matthew 24:8 (NASB95)**

<sup>8</sup> "But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs.

When do birth pangs occur? At the very end... not at conception, not all throughout the pregnancy, they occur last of all. And the dramatically escalate in Frequency and Intensity.

That is why you see all of this language in the Gospel and in the Epistles about - be ready, it's like a thief in the night, you won't see it coming until it's upon you.

**ILLUSTRATION:** I remember when Julie experienced her first pregnancy. We jumped at every hiccup. We did not know what we did not know. We weren't real sure what a contraction was. So we made a couple of false alarm trips to the Hospital. But then when here water broke around 11PM at night while we were laying in bed and contractions began...we weren't wondering... could this be labor beginning? It was unmistakable!

These signs of the coming of Christ will be **sudden and unmistakable**.

Keep in mind our first child was born in 2001. They could give us a pretty good idea of what to expect... they could even predict the day. But when Jesus is preaching the Olivet Discourse it was different. They knew the gestation period was around nine months, but often they didn't know for certain when conception occurred, or how far along the baby was... they waited for birth pangs.

*Most of the 10 signs have occurred for the last 2000 years, but what you are to watch for is a sudden, sharp increase in their frequency and intensity.*

- Wars and Rumors of wars will suddenly increase.
- False prophets and false Christs will suddenly increase.
- Signs in the Heavens and in the Earth will suddenly increase.

We don't get the idea that this will be something that can be measured out over hundreds of years or decades... but rather a sudden thing.

There will be **no time to prepare** or get ready... that's why He says over and over, **stay awake**, be on the alert... live as if it could happen before this day is over.

*They will be like birth pangs...*

## 2. The Signs will Dominate the Planet

**Matthew 24:9 (NASB95)**

<sup>9</sup>“Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.

Nations is the word Ethnos. It was used to speak of any non Jewish group of people. Someone might say, well there is persecution in Iran, or China... but we are looking for a persecution by ALL NATIONS. There will be no **safe place** for a Christian outside of the church.

Now what you are seeing develop now in our own country very well may be setting the stage for what Jesus is warning about.

**ILLUSTRATION:** I saw recently a facebook group that I'm a part of locally rebuke the members for saying anything that might be interpreted as religious... no church invites, no scripture... but RAINBOW flags and PRIDE slogans... that's fine!

**Isaiah 5:20** warns of a day when evil will be called good and darkness will be called light and bitter will be called sweet. Friend that day has come.

Marriage is being redefined and undefined.

Those who proclaimed the **wisdom of science** a generation ago, IGNORE science when it comes to Gender.

These things are just the beginning. You want to see the future trajectory of our country look to the UNIVERSITIES and the FRINGE Politicians.

The word UNIVERSITY means UNITY in DIVERSITY. But our diversity is not welcome.

Ask yourself what **world view** is being proposed by our Universities. Friend, for the most part it's GODLESS, Atheistic, meaningless, hopeless.

*They will be like birth pangs...they will dominate the planet...*

## 3. The Epicenter of the Signs will be Political Israel

**The clearest indication of this is found in verse 15-**

<sup>15</sup>“Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), <sup>16</sup> then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.

This seems to indicate that there will be a restoration of temple worship but this would not be Herod's temple because Jesus has already predicted it's destruction which happened in AD 70.

Some have said, "Well Pastor, when I turn on CNN or FOX news and a temple is being erected in Israel - I will know that you were right and I'll get my house in order.

No friend, it doesn't work that way - this temple may literally be erected overnight as is Ezra 3:2 when the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon and through up a tent like structure to begin sacrifices.

***Oh friend the history of that magnificent country is staggering, but it is nothing compared to its future.***

That is one of the reasons I feel led to take people to see the land of Israel.

- I want you to see the place where our Lord will return.
- I want you to see the place where Jesus throne will one day sit.
- I want you to see the place where the Government will be on His blessed shoulders.

A child of God ought to perk up when they see Israel in the news. What are the chances that in our lifetime Political Israel that had not existed in hundreds of years would be once again fly the flag of David over that history city??

#### **Matthew 24:32–33 (ESV)**

<sup>32</sup> "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near." <sup>33</sup> "So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates."

The fig tree has historically been the scriptural symbol of Israel. Folks the fig tree is in bloom... the fruit is forming... the summer of his coming is at hand.

*They will be like birth pangs...they will dominate the planet...Israel will be the epicenter....*

## **4. The Signs are Completely Fulfilled in a Single Generation**

#### **Matthew 24:34 (NASB95)**

<sup>34</sup> "Truly I say to you, **this generation** (What generation? The generation that sees these signs) will not pass away until all these things take place."

A Generation can be anywhere from 30-100 years biblically. When these signs begin to unfold, they will last for a period of SEVEN years, the last 3.5 are called the GREAT TRIBULATION.

Listen, we could complete the tribulation period before my youngest child graduates high school.

The stage is set perfectly.

Someone says, "Pastor, well when I see all of these things you'll preach about taking place I'll get my house and my heart in order". If that's your heart I want to show you one of the scariest verses in scripture....

#### **2 Thessalonians 2:7–13 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. That's this last days influence that we talked about earlier that subverts the truth in culture...

7b. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.

*That refers to the Holy Spirit who will be taken away when the Church is removed from the planet.*

<sup>8</sup> And then the lawless one will be revealed. That is AntiChrist.

8b. 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,***

You say, "Pastor, I will get saved when I get ready to get saved" NO SIR - you will get saved when the Holy Spirit of God is drawing and convicting, or you will not get saved at all.