

# Matthew 24:15-31

## “The King’s Judgment”

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**Intro.** “Let not your hearts be troubled ...” Jesus offers these words of comfort, because our hearts are troubled. Life in this fallen world is overwhelming, and without Jesus physically present it seems more difficult. The last nine months have been a challenging season for me in ministry. And I know that many of us have experienced circumstances that cause us to worry, or be discouraged. Why should we not lose heart? Jesus said, because He has gone to prepare a place for us, and will return so that we can be with Him forever [Jn. 14:1-3].

**Subject:** The Great Tribulation and Second Coming

**Object:** Be encouraged and ready

**Context:** Jesus and His disciple are at the Mount of Olives days before the cross. The disciples ask, when will the temple be destroyed, what will be the sign of your return and the end of the age [i.e. When will you reign] [24:3]?

#### A. The Great Tribulation [15-28]

<sup>15</sup> “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), <sup>16</sup> “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup> And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>19</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup> And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. <sup>22</sup> And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. <sup>23</sup> “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*. <sup>24</sup> For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. <sup>25</sup> See, I have told you beforehand. <sup>26</sup> “Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; *or* ‘Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!’ do not believe *it*. <sup>27</sup> For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>28</sup> For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

**We need a righteous king to establish true justice, peace, righteousness, and love ...**

The “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Daniel [15, Dan. 9:24-27] refers to sin so grievous that God will bring strong and swift judgment. In Daniel 9 there is a seven-year peace treaty between Israel and its enemies brokered by the Antichrist [AC]. The treaty will allow Israel to rebuild its Temple and the AC will be hailed as a great man of peace. This is the start of the Great Tribulation (the last

seven years of this age where God brings His Judgment) [Dan.9:24-27, Ezek.42:20]. At the 3.5-year mark (Mid-Trib) the AC forbids sacrifices and worship of God at the temple, and enters the Holy of Holies and demands to be worshiped as God [2Th. 2:3-4, Rev. 13]. This is *the abomination*. God's people are to *understand* [15]: pay attention, and be prepared. Dan 12:1 describes this as the time of trouble as never before or since; and Jer. 30:7 calls it the "Time of Jacob's Trouble." Jesus referred to it as great tribulation [21]. Those in Judea, the southern portion of Israel, are to flee hastily. In Israel, people gather on flat roofs with a low wall and outside staircase. No time to go inside to grab stuff if you were on the roof or in the field [17-18]. This warning would apply to the siege of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple [AD 66-70, Lu.21:20]. During the siege, many Christians escaped to the mountains per Jesus' warning. And the warning relates to the Great Tribulation. During the first 3.5 years, there is peace and the temple will be rebuilt, but when the AC commands to be worshiped God's people must escape quickly. The exhortation to pray that you would not need to flee on Sabbath [20] would be an issue for Jews rather than the Church. But in Israel public transportation on Sabbath is very limited. An observant Jew would not walk more than a 1000 yards on the Sabbath, because of the rabbinical interpretation that walking a greater distance constitutes "work" in violation of the Sabbath. Jesus called this a time of tribulation greater than any other in human history [21]. When we consider the atrocities of wars, genocide, famines, and diseases through the ages it is difficult to imagine how horrific God's judgment of evil will be in the Great Tribulation. Unless the duration was limited (e.g. 3.5 years) nothing would survive [22]. Per Zechariah 13:8-9 only one-third of humanity survives. But because of God's promise to save the elect they days are limited [22]. Here, the promise is likely referring to surviving Jews (and Gentiles) that will receive Christ during the Great Tribulation [Zech. 13-14, Is. 45:4, Rom. 11:28]. Don't be deceived by false signs or false prophets or [2Th. 2:8-10, Rev.13:11-15] that declare that Christ has come privately [23-26]. An example includes the Jehovah's Witnesses that declare that Jesus came privately to them in 1921. Jesus' return will be very public, visible, and obvious to all, like lightning flashing across the sky [27]. The term translated "coming" is the Greek term *Parousia* that speaks of the power and authority of the king. Just like a gathering of vultures shows that there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate the end is near [28].

I thank God for Jesus' First Coming, because through His sacrifice for my sin and His resurrection, I can experience forgiveness of my sin against God, and the hope of eternity with God. In a certain sense that would be good enough. But in another sense, it isn't good enough. We need a righteous King. And before the end of this age, we will need one even more. When Christ returns, He will vanquish evil and rebellion against God. He will establish His reign on earth and usher in *true* justice, peace, righteousness and love [Rev. 20:1-6]. Those who are His will receive resurrected bodies perfectly suited to spend eternity with Him.

They'll be no more disease, decay, or death and, we will be free from temptation to sin.

## **B. The Second Coming [29-31]**

**<sup>29</sup> "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup> Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> And He**

**will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**

**We need to be delivered from this world and be delivered to His.**

Darkness [29] is a symbol of Judgment [Amos 8:9, Rev. 6:12]. Then the glorious light of Christ's glory and power will be manifest and Christ will appear [30, Rev.19:11]. The clouds [30] are a reference to the manifest presence of God. There is the great sound of a trumpet that signals the angels to gather His elect from the four winds or four compass points [31]. The trumpet is blown to signal the gathering of God's people [Zech. 9:14-15]. These elect are presumed to be those who came to faith in Christ during the Great Tribulation [Tribulation Saints] and are alive at His return. As we believe the Church is raptured prior to God's judgment and thus delivered from His wrath [1Th.4:13-18, 5:9].

**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 [Rev. 1:7].**

There is comfort in knowing that He will come as promised and will deliver those who are His. And that He will make things right. And best of all that I will be with Him in Paradise. What makes heaven "heavenly" is Jesus' presence with no sin to obstruct or obscure. And in my greatest struggles, Jesus (and the promise of His Coming) is my greatest hope and comfort.

Not only will I be delivered from this world but I will be delivered to His.

### **C. What shall we do until His return?**

#### **1. Believe and receive Jesus [Jn. 14:1-6]**

#### **2. Be encouraged [Titus 2:13]** Let not our hearts be troubled ...

**"Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" [Titus 2:13]**

#### **3. Be ready [1 Jn. 3:2-3]** We want to be prepared by living our lives as set-apart for Jesus

**"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" [1Jn. 3:2-3].**

### **Study Guide Qs**

- 1. What are some of the difficult struggles that you are dealing with in this season of life?**
- 2. How does the hope of Christ's return provide comfort and encouragement to you in this season of your life?**
- 3. In light of Christ's return what changes do you want to make to be better prepared?**
- 4. Try to imagine a world with true love, justice, righteousness and peace. A world where Christ rules without any corruption of any sort. How does it make you feel?**