

The anti-Christ and Tribulation (Part 2)

Matthew 24: 15-22

In our previous study we considered the rise of anti-Christ on the global scene. He will come to power with the promise of peace, uniting the world with his agenda. The peace accord with Israel will be brokered, and the world will enjoy a season of peace and prosperity. After three and a half years, anti-Christ will break the deal with Israel, setting himself up as the sovereign, and unleash a campaign of terror, death, and mayhem. While many will finally see him for the diabolical fraud he is, it will be too late.

Along with the brutal campaign of anti-Christ, God will begin to pour out His wrath and judgment upon the earth. This is described in Revelation as the seals are opened, and the unadulterated wrath of God is poured out upon those who have denied the Lord and rejected His grace. This will be the time often referred to in Scripture as Jacob's Trouble. One cannot possibly imagine the horror involved in facing the brutalities of the anti-Christ and the wrath of God.

As we continue to consider the [perils](#) revealed in the text, I want to take a moment to review our last study. We discovered this will be:

I. A Time of Desolation (15)

A. The Character (Minister of Satan)

B. The Conditions

1. Social Depravity (Perilous Times)

2. Spiritual Apostasy (Great Falling Away)

C. The Charisma (United Nations, Economy, Peace)

D. The Corruption (Abomination of Desolation)

II. A Time of Desperation (16-20) – Jesus also revealed this will be a time of unprecedented desperation, especially in Jerusalem and throughout Israel. Notice:

A. The Directive (16) – **Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.** We must remember that the world will be in the midst of the Great Tribulation at this time. The anti-Christ will have his grip on power, ruling the world under the direction of Satan himself. The seals will begin to be opened in heaven, and God will unleash His wrath upon the earth. While the entire world will be forced to deal with the devastation of the Tribulation, Jesus speaks directly to those who are dwelling in Judea. He speaks directly to the nation of Israel. Although the anti-Christ will not discriminate with his plan of devastation and suffering, he will direct much of his anger and

destruction toward the nation of Israel. Jesus warns those who dwell in Israel at that time to flee into the mountains in an effort to escape the suffering brought about by anti-Christ.

- Through this specific warning, we discover that much of the hatred and animosity of anti-Christ, and ultimately Satan himself, will be directed at Israel. Really this should come as no surprise. Satan tried down through the ages of time to eliminate Israel in an effort to destroy the bloodline of the Messiah. These are God's Covenant people. They will face an intense and especially hateful attack during the Tribulation. Israel has always been forced to deal with the assault of the enemy. Throughout her history, she has faced many attacks. This continues today, with most of the Arab nations, and much of the world opposed to her existence as a nation.

B. The Dispersion (17-18) – **Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:** ^[18] **Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.** Jesus revealed the urgency this moment will require for those in Judea at that time. There will be no time to make any last minute preparations. They will need to immediately flee into the mountains in an effort to escape the devastation anti-Christ will bring. Those on the housetop will not have time to go into the house and gather any additional provisions. Those who are caught out in the fields will not have time to return home to gather clothes for the journey. When the moment of desperation strikes, they will need to flee immediately into the mountains, seeking safety and shelter.

- All of this will be set in motion by the anti-Christ desecrating the Temple and setting himself up as God. Following that event, he will unleash his campaign of terror against Israel. When they hear of the abomination of desolation in the Temple, they will need to immediately flee into the mountains.

C. The Difficulty (19) – **And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!** Jesus offers a specific warning to the women who are pregnant or nursing children when that dreadful time comes. He knew this would be a very difficult journey to make, emotionally and logistically, much less with the added stress that accompanies pregnant and nursing mothers. They will not only have to care for themselves, but also for their unborn or infant children.

- Clearly we see in this warning of Jesus the difficulty and desperation of that moment. Many today laugh and joke about hell and the end times, but this will be no laughing matter. Those who are forced to deal with this, especially the believing Jews in Israel, will face a time unlike any they've experienced. Can you imagine having to flee into the mountains with basically what you can carry in your hands, without knowing exactly where you will spend the night and what type shelter or provision will be available? This will be a startling reality for many in that day.

D. The Desire (20) – *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.* Jesus also revealed that these should pray that they are not forced to flee into the mountains during the winter months or on a Sabbath. We understand the difficulties associated with traveling in the winter months. Also, even though these will be Jews who have received Christ as Savior, they would likely be hindered by legalistic, unbelieving Jews if they were forced to flee on the Sabbath. They could face being stoned or abused by those who greatly restrict activities on the Sabbath days. Simply, Jesus warned this time will have sufficient difficulty without added stress and hindrances. They should pray that their escape would be quick and easy.

III. A Time of Tribulation (21-22) – As we conclude our study today, we come to Jesus' warning of coming Tribulation. He revealed:

A. The Severity (21) – *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.* Jesus warned that when the Tribulation comes it will be a time of devastation unlike the world has ever experienced. It will be a time of unrivaled suffering and wrath, past and future. While the book of Revelation reveals great detail of this time in Chapters 6-16, it remains beyond our ability to comprehend. The prophets of old had insight to this time of devastation, and yet they too were unable to fully grasp its enormity. *Joel 2:1-2 – Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; ^[2] A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.*

- I am convinced that humanity lacks the vocabulary and wisdom to fully describe the horrors that will be unleashed upon the earth during the Tribulation. It is beyond our ability to comprehend an event worse than some of the atrocities recorded in human history. Consider for a moment the campaign of terror Hitler unleashed against the Jews during World War II. I thought of the suffering and devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as atomic bombs were dropped on them. Consider the brutal tactics of ISIS and many of the extremist today. Jesus declared our world has yet to experience the suffering that will be endured in the Tribulation.

B. The Sovereignty (22) – *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.* The Tribulation will be the result of mankind's utter rebellion toward God and rejection of the Gospel. When grace is rejected, wrath and judgment are all that remain. One cannot argue that God would be just in destroying all of creation for its rebellion. In fact, none deserve the mercy and favor of God. However, Jesus revealed that

even in wrath, God will show mercy and grace. The world could not endure and extended period of destruction that will transpire during the Tribulation. If those days were not limited in duration, all flesh would perish from the earth. God has set the bounds of time regarding the Tribulation. It will all transpire as He ordained. Some believe this speaks of a supernatural shortening of days, as the sun is darkened during the Tribulation. I have no doubt that God can do whatever He pleases, but I believe it speaks merely of a predetermined duration.

- God will be merciful for the elect's sake. There is some debate as to whom that speaks of exactly. Some contend that it speaks of the nation of Israel being the elect, God's Covenant people. Others contend that it speaks of those who receive the Gospel and are saved during the Tribulation. I have no problem with either, and believe that it may speak of both. Whatever the case, God will show mercy in the midst of wrath and judgment.

Conclusion: I think we all can agree that this is a very sobering passage. Jesus spoke prophetic words that will be fulfilled according to the sovereign plan of God. Every word Jesus spoke will be carried out just as He said. The world will face unknown and unprecedented wrath and devastation. The Tribulation will be a time of suffering and despair for the world.

The question of the hour today is – have you been saved by the grace of God? Have you realized your need for Christ, repented of sin, and believed that He died to pardon your iniquity and rose again for your justification? If not, I urge you to respond in repentance and faith today unto salvation. If you are saved, I pray this passage will create a desire within you to share the Gospel and reach the unsaved while there is time and opportunity!