

## 2 WHAT DID JESUS TEACH ABOUT THE LAST DAYS AND HIS RETURN?

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**What?/** We begin with the teaching of Jesus on the end of the present age and of His glorious return. **Why?/** Jesus' teaching bridges the gap from the Old Testament to the New Testament by linking the words of the Prophets (particularly Daniel) with things that are still yet future even from our perspective. **How?/** Jesus, just like the Prophets before Him, gives us a general picture of the events that precede His return. In order to understand the later writings of the New Testament we must first understand what Jesus said.

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### 2.1 WHAT signs did Jesus teach the disciples to watch for? (Matthew 24:1-51; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-38)

**Matthew 24:1-3** 1 Now as Jesus was going out of the temple courts and walking away, his disciples came to show him the temple buildings. 2 And he said to them, "Do you see all these things? I tell you the truth, not one stone will be left on another. All will be torn down!" 3 As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

#### 2.1.1 There will be False Messiahs, Wars and Disasters.

**Matthew 24:4** Jesus answered them, "Watch out that no one misleads you. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will mislead many. 6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. Make sure that you are not alarmed, for this must happen, **but the end is still to come.** 7 For nation will rise up in arms against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 **All these things are the beginning of birth pains.**

>>**Luke 21:11** There will be great earthquakes, and famines and plagues in various places, and **there will be terrifying sights and great signs from heaven.**

### 2.1.2 There will be persecution, false prophets, lawlessness and a final testimony.

**Matthew 24:9** “Then (“but before all this” Lk 21:12) they will hand you over to be persecuted and will kill you. You will be hated by all the nations because of my name. 10 Then many will be led into sin, and they will betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will appear and deceive many, 12 and because lawlessness will increase so much, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the person who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole inhabited earth as a testimony to all the nations, **and then the end will come.**

>>**Mark 13:9-13** “You must watch out for yourselves. You will be handed over to councils and beaten in the synagogues. You will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a witness to them. 10 First the gospel must be preached to all nations. 11 When they arrest you and hand you over for trial, do not worry about what to speak. But say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. 12 Brother will hand over brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise against parents and have them put to death. 13 You will be hated by everyone because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

>>**Luke 21:18-19** *Yet not a hair of your head will perish.* 19 By your endurance you will gain your lives.

### 2.1.3 The Abomination of Desolation (Antichrist) will appear.

**Matthew 24:15** “So when you see the abomination of desolation -- spoken about by Daniel the prophet -- standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then those in must flee to the mountains. 17 The one on the roof must not come down to take anything out of his house, 18 and the one in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. 19 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing their babies in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.

>>**Luke 21:20-24** ***“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.*** 21 Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Those who are inside the city must depart. Those who are out in the country must not enter it, 22 because these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. 23 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing their babies in

those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away as captives among all nations. ***Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.***

#### 2.1.4 The Great Suffering (Tribulation) will occur.

**Matthew 24:21** For then there will be ***great suffering*** unlike anything that has happened from the beginning of the world until now, or ever will happen. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

#### 2.1.5 Messianic Imposters will appear.

**Matthew 24:23** Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe him. 24 For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 ***Remember, I have told you ahead of time.*** 26 So then, if someone says to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, or ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe him. 27 For just like the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. 28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

#### 2.1.6 Christ will return in terrifying glory.

**Matthew 24:29** “Immediately after the suffering of those days, **THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT (Isaiah 13:10); THE STARS WILL FALL FROM HEAVEN (Isaiah 34:4), AND THE POWERS OF HEAVEN WILL BE SHAKEN (Joel 2:10).** 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. ***They will see the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*** 31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

>>**Mark 13:27** Then he will send angels and they will gather his elect from the four winds, ***from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.***

>>**Luke 21:25-28** “And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth nations will be in distress, anxious over the roaring

of the sea and the surging waves. 26 People will be fainting from fear and from the expectation of what is coming on the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see the Son of Man arriving in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 ***But when these things begin to happen, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.***”

### 2.1.7 The nearness of Jesus’ return can be anticipated by the signs.

**Matthew 24:32** “Learn this parable from the fig tree: Whenever its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So also you, when you see all these things, know that he is near, right at the door. 34 *I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.* 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. 36 “But as for that day and hour no one knows it -- not even the angels in heaven -- except the Father alone.

### 2.1.8 We are to be alert because Jesus will return suddenly and unexpectedly.

**Matthew 24:37-43** For just like the days of Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be.... *Therefore stay alert, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come...* 44 ***Therefore you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him....***”

>>**Mark 13:37** What I say to you I say to everyone: Stay alert!”

>>**Luke 21:34-38** ***“But be on your guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day close down upon you suddenly like a trap.*** 35 For it will overtake all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 But stay alert at all times, ***praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that must happen, and to stand before the Son of Man.***” 37 So every day Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, but at night he went and stayed on the Mount of Olives. 38 And all the people came to him early in the morning to listen to him in the temple courts.

### 2.1.9 The Parable of the Faithful Slave (Mt 24:45-51)

### 2.1.10 The Parable of the Ten Virgins (Mt 25:1-13)

### 2.1.11 The Parable of the Talents (Mt 25:14-30)

### 2.1.12 The Judgment of the Sheep and Goats (Mt 25:31-46)

» *At this point Matthew picks up the narrative of Jesus' betrayal.*

## 2.2 WHY is it important to know these things?

In order to get a clear and coherent picture of the New Testaments teaching on the End, we must start with Jesus' teaching. Many teachers and scholars jump right to Paul or John. However, we must remember that they are building on Jesus' former teaching not vice versa. *Jesus' gives a framework that all the other New Testament writers build upon.* Many of the themes and ideas that Jesus introduces in the passages we have considered are developed and clarified by His apostles (Peter, John, Paul) who build upon the foundation that He laid.

Here is the general order of events as Jesus presents this material:

- 1/** The rise of false messiahs and false prophets.
- 2/** Wars, turmoil, famines and earthquakes.
- 3/** The Persecution of Jesus' disciples.
- 4/** An increase of lawlessness and rebellion.
- 5/** The preaching of the Gospel to the nations before the End.
- 6/** The Abomination of Desolation - Antichrist proclaiming himself to be God.
- 7/** The Great Tribulation.
- 8/** The glorious, terrifying and unexpected return of Jesus.
- 9/** The gathering of the elect.

### 2.3 HOW should we live in light of these things?

- » *We can take great encouragement knowing that the Lord will return to set all things right.*
- » *We can cultivate an attitude of watchfulness, not enslaved by ungodly fear of the End, but motivated by godly fear - desiring to be faithful, wise slaves when our Lord returns.*
- » *We can cultivate an attitude of prayer that strengthens us for effectively engaging the times in which we live.*

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#### Preparing for Next Week:

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17. **OBSERVE** what is similar in that passage to what we have considered this week.

**For those of you who would like to dig deeper, take the list of nine events from the previous page and CORRELATE these events with similar events in other relevant passages in the New Testament, particularly the book of Revelation.** We will correlate all of these as we progress in the study.

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