

THE LAST WEEK OF THE LORD JESUS ON EARTH

IVx. Jesus' Final Day of Public Teaching (cont.)

Jesus Proclaims Truth (Part 21^d) First Watch c. 7:00 P.M., Wednesday, 12th Nisán (April 1), A.D.33. Lesson: **Consummation of Age Signs Concluded** Mt. 24:9-31; Mk. 13:9-27; Lk. 21:10-19.

Introduction: Having examined the Lessons that The Lord Jesus taught in The Temple to the multitude and His disciples during the day on Wednesday, we then began to consider His exit from The Temple and His prophetic teaching on the journey up to and upon The Mount of Olives.

I. **Exiting The Temple** (Mt. 24:1,2; Mk. 13:1,2; Lk. 21:5,6)

When exiting and journeying away from The Temple, most likely through the East or Golden Gate, the disciples approached the face of Jesus to exhibit to Him, the buildings of The Temple and The Lord Jesus' response to the disciples' observation followed by the disciples' silence while meditating as they finished walking up The Mount of Olives.

II. **Teaching on The Mount of Olives** (Mk. 13:5-36; Mt. 24:4-41; Lk. 21:8-32).

After Jesus located a position on the Mount of Olives directly in the view opposite The Temple, Peter, James, and John approached Him privately and asked Him three questions which He answered: When? What is the miraculous-sign of your coming-presence? When shall these things come to pass and what signs for which to look? and What is the miraculous-sign of the consummation of the age?

A. **Answering the First Question:** When shall these things be? c. 6:40 P.M. (Mt. 24:4-8; Mk. 13:5-8; Lk. 21:8-11).

We noted the necessity to constantly keep in mind the progressive Revelation by The God through the centuries and to differentiate between the events relating to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the air for His Church (the Rapture) and all the redeemed regenerated saints on the one hand, and on the other hand His Return back to Earth physically (The Revelation), referred to in Scripture as His Parousia or His coming-presence back to Earth to set up His longed for, and particularly by The Jewish nation, anticipated Kingdom. Also it is necessary to keep in mind the difference between the gospel that John the Baptizer and The Lord Jesus proclaimed, **until** The Lord Jesus was rejected by Israel and in turn He rejected Israel (Mt. 10:1-12:30), and **until** John was beheaded, was the gospel of The Kingdom. But **after** The Lord Jesus introduced The Church that He would be building (Mt. 16:18), He began to clarify the separation of The Church and Israel on the one hand and the gospel of the Kingdom (Millennial) of the Heavens distinct from The Gospel of The Kingdom of The God (Eternal) and the progressive revelation by The God through the centuries on the other hand. Since He made this distinction, we are responsible to do the same! Here Matthew records that on the Mount of Olives The Lord Jesus made several distinctions which we do well to observe (24:3-25:26).

It was noted that The Lord Jesus did not answer the disciples' question directly but rather He cited six occurrences or indications that must occur **before** His parousia (coming presence) to the Earth can take place, thus it is not immediately the end. Some of these occurrences shall also take place before He comes in the air for His Church, also called The Rapture. Therefore His disciples and **we** are constantly to beware that **no one** mislead us! Satan is extremely active and becomes more so as the time draws near. He is masterful at

misleading and deceiving humans as he did in the beginning (Gen. 3:1-7). Therefore be vigilant! The six occurrences are:

1. Many false Christs or antichrists who mislead humans shall appear **before** He comes in the air for His disciples (Mt. 24:5; Lk. 21:8).
He warned, Do not journey after them!

2. Wars, Reports (rumors) of wars, and seditions (insurrections against authority) shall take place **before** the consummation of the age and The Tribulation begins (Lk. 21:9; Mt. 24:6, **8,9**; Mk. 13:7).

These conditions must take place before the redemption of our bodies (Lk. 21:28; Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:20,21), which occurs when He descends in the air to take His Church to Heaven. This event must take place before the seven year Tribulation of Israel begins (Mt. 24:8,9).

3. Nation shall-be-raised-up against nation and kingdom against kingdom (Mt. 24:7; Mk. 13:8; Lk. 21:10).

There are numerous uprisings around the world: nationals rebelling against political leaders; nationals fighting nationals; intertribal revolts within nations as well as nations warring against and invading nations. No doubt more of this shall occur as we near the Tribulation period.

4. Great Earthquakes Everywhere [lit. from place to place] (Lk. 21:11; Mt. 24:7; Mk. 13:8).

There has been an increasing number of intense and destructive earthquakes in the world during the succeeding years. This is another indication of the nearness of His coming in the air to take His redeemed saints to Heaven.

5. Famines and Pestilences and Disturbances Everywhere (Lk. 21:10; Mt. 24:7; Lk. 21:11).

In this last year or so the whole world has been affected by drought in many locations, resulting in shortage of supplies, rising prices, and eventually famines. As to the frequency of disturbances: strikes for more wages and for government handouts, benefits, and employment and as well much displeasure with the way politicians have been governing. In addition, uprisings and revolt about political decisions around the world, etc. have been increasing everywhere. Pestilences cause outbreaks of destructive plagues containing infectious and contagious diseases causing noxious, virulent devastation, resulting in mass death over broad areas. This is yet another indication of the nearness of His coming in the air.

6. Both Terrifying Omens (threats of doom) and great miraculous signs from Heaven (Lk. 21:11).

Could this be referring to the great storms of wind and rain and hail that have been increasing worldwide: tornadoes, tsunamis, and typhoons as well as stars falling and meteors colliding or crashing to Earth? Or could it be referring to the many disasters devised by deranged and angered humans to destroy human lives and costly buildings as in 9/11 and property by various divisive explosives using hydrogen, uranium, sulfur, dynamite, TNT, and/or poisonous and destructive hazardous chemicals as anthrax, cyanide, etc. or both as well as the disastrous results of inclement weather? Or both?

After citing all these occurrences as signs of His coming, The Lord Jesus related that "All these-things ^{are} beginnings of birth-pangs which are preliminary troubles to the development of a catastrophe." These must take place before the Rapture (The Lord Jesus Christ comes again in the air for His Church). It can be said that these troubles have been happening through the years and it is true. But it is obvious that

there has been an increase in severity and frequency in recent years.

B. Answering the Second Question: What is the miraculous-sign of The Parousia i.e. “Your Coming-Presence”? c. 6:40 P.M. (Lk. 21:8,9;)

In order to answer the first two complicated questions that the disciples asked The Lord Jesus, He had to include the miraculous signs which involved both of two events that covered more than seven years after the first event. He grouped them together because He must cover the signs and occurrences before both events in order to get to the signs before The Parousia. The disciples were addressed as representatives of the Jewish nation. They were not yet ready or capable of being informed in detail, grasping, and fully understanding the distinctions between the two events, the Rapture and The Parousia. Keep in mind the time that they asked the questions and where they were in the course of The God’s progressive revelation. They were still living under The Law until Pentecost, the birth of His Church. It was not until Paul wrote his Epistles that the regenerated disciples in The Church were able to understand, grasp, and proclaim these Truths. Therefore once these distinctions between these coming events are clearly presented and the reason why The Lord Jesus answered this way, these Blessed Truths become understandable.

In order to clarify the sequence of events that shall take place, it is absolutely necessary to pay close attention to words and phrases referring to time, in this case: ‘whenever,’ ‘first,’ ‘the end,’ ‘not yet,’ ‘come-to-pass,’ ‘beginning,’ ‘at-that-time,’ and ‘until.’ These were underlined in the reference in last week’s lesson for ready location.

The word *συντελείας* (suntehleh-éeahs) is properly translated ‘consummation’ instead of ‘end.’ The word *αἰών* (aiōn) has sometimes been mistranslated as ‘world’ instead of ‘age.’ This has led many people to believe that when Jesus returns to Earth that will be the end of the world rather than The Lord Jesus Christ coming back to set-up His kingdom to reign a thousand years. Therefore ‘the end’ in this context, in which Jesus used it, refers to the end of the age. This is Jesus’ answer to the second and partially the third questions that the disciples asked.

C. Answering the Third Question: Signs of the Consummation of the Age c. 6:45 P.M. (Mt. 24:9-31; Mk. 13:9-23; Lk. 21:10-19).

The disciples asked The Lord Jesus for a sign of His Coming Presence (Parousia) and a sign of the consummation of the age but He gave them several signs in order to discern the nearness of, and the difference between the occurrence of, two phases of His coming. As noted in a previous lesson their questions involved two events of His coming. He addressed them as repentant disciple-follower-Jews anticipating The Messiah’s coming to set up His Millennial Kingdom according to John the Baptizer’s Baptism of Repentance for remission (forgiveness) of sins (Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3; Acts 13:24; 19:4). Therefore Jesus’ prophetic answer was primarily focused upon the events relating to the Jewish nation. However He could not fully answer their questions without including the place in the future that applied to His Church which He began to build (Mt. 16:18) with His disciples as workmen, who shall build upon the foundation, which He Himself would become within four days (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20). The Church age would take place between the near future and the seven year tribulation period.

There are three factors which we shall consider concerning The Tribulation: Beginnings of Birth Pangs, The Length of Time Encom-

passed, and The Signs to Alert the Nearness of the End.

1. Beginnings of Birth Pangs (Mk. 13:8; Mt. 24:8).

These are the conditions on Earth that shall occur before The Rapture and they alert the faithful ones who responded to the gospel of the Kingdom that 'the appointed time stands drawn near' (Mt. 24:8,9 APT).

2. The period of time in which 'the prince that shall come' is one week ('heptad' or seven years, Dan. 9:26). He also is referred to as 'the beast out of the sea' (metaphor for 'of nations,' Rev. 13:1), the Antichrist, The Man of The Sin, the Son of Utter Destruction (2 Thes. 2:3,4), whose number of his name is 666. This period of time is referred to as The Tribulation (Mt. 24:8,9 APT) and covers one week (heptad) of years divided into two segments of three and half years each (Dan. 9:27).

a. 'The Tribulation' is the term Scriptures use to indicate the whole seven year period following sometime after The Rapture and beginning when The Man of The Sin makes a seven year covenant of peace with Israel (Dan. 9:27).

b. The Gospel of The Kingdom shall be once again proclaimed as a herald, but this time to all The World 'in the whole inhabited Globe' (Mt. 24:14 APT).

Matthew has referred to the beginning of The Tribulation as 'at that time' three times (Mt. 24:9,10, 14b).

c. The second half of three and a half years shall begin whenever the Jews behold the abomination of the desolation stand in The Holy Place (Mt. 24:15 cf. Dan. 11:30,31; 12:11) and shall last for 'a time and times and the dividing of time' (Dan. 7:25; 12:6,7).

d. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of The Tribulation for Israel as "appointed Times of Gentiles" (Lk. 21:24) and referred to by Daniel as "The Abomination of Desolation" (Dan. 8:13 cf. 12:7). But this occurrence is 'not yet' or 'still future' while some of these occurrences indicate that "the appointed time of His Coming in the air" 'stands-drawn-near.' But The Great Tribulation for Israel followed by His Parousia (Revelation or Return to Earth) and 'the end' is 'not yet' 'come-to-pass' or 'still future'. However, we are reminded that The Lord Jesus warned His disciples, and us, if indeed we are His disciples, "Be-vigilant! Be not alarmed!"

3. The Seven Signs to Alert the Nearness of the End of the Age.

a. The proclamation-as-a-herald of The Gospel of the Kingdom, heralding The Lord Jesus Christ's Return to set-up His Millennial Kingdom throughout the whole inhabited Globe, shall be resumed after nearly two thousand years. This third factor will alert the faithful ones who responded to the gospel of the Kingdom that the time of His Second Advent stands near-at-hand. After seven years of proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom has reached the whole globe, the end of that age shall arrive (Mt. 24:14).

However this proclamation is yet future and preceded by The Rapture, The coming in the air of The Lord Jesus Christ to gather up together, the regenerated saints out of their graves first and then those still alive on Earth together to meet in the clouds and then to meet Him in glorified resurrection bodies. Thus both the dead (sleeping) saints and the still living saints shall meet Him together at the same time, after the dead saints are raised up first (1 Thes. 4:13-17). Shortly thereafter The Tribulation shall begin.

b. Betrayal, trials, and death (Mk. 13:9,11-13 cf. Mt. 23:9-13; Lk.

21:12,16-19). Following the spread of the gospel of the kingdom, those proclaiming it shall be betrayed and led into tribunals and thrashed in the synagogues, brother shall betray brother to death and father shall betray the child, children shall rise up against parents and be put to death (killed). And there will be betrayal of parents, relatives, and friends and execution, as well as Jews being persecuted and imprisoned (Lk. 21:12-19 APT).

- c. The Occurrence of the Abomination of the Desolation Standing in The Holy Place (Mt. 24:15-22; Mk. 13:14-20).

This is the sign that indicates the beginning of the Great Tribulation lasting three and a half years. Three times Matthew indicates that Jesus used the phrase 'at that time' to indicate this fact (24:16,21,23); Mark used it twice (13:14,21); and Luke used it three times (21:10,20,21). It is also indicated that the surrounding of Jerusalem by an army encampment shall soon follow and prompts the faithful Jews that the desolation of Jerusalem including The Temple 'stands drawn near' (Lk. 21:20 APT). 'At that time' the faithful Jews "in Judea are to begin successfully fleeing up to the mountains" (Mt. 24:16-22 cf. Mk. 13:14-20; Lk. 21:21-23 cf. Rev. 12:6). This Truth is further enhanced and requires further advanced study of Scripture to clarify and learn more details of the desolate place that The Lord God has provided in the mountains for Israel during the Great Tribulation.

- d. False prophets and false Christs shall be raised up and give miraculous signs and wonders so as to misled and if (and it is true) it is possible, even the elect ones (Mt. 24:23,24; Mk. 13:22,23).
- e. Eagles gathering together wherever corpses lay is another sign of the Parousia, the Return of The Lord Jesus to The Earth (Lk. 21:28). On the one hand as the result of persecution, torture, and execution by stoning of relatives and friends, and on the other hand slaughter by warfare and by edge of sword, dead bodies that are left unburied shall attract the eagles (Mt. 24:24-28; Lk. 21:23b-24).
- f. Five Miraculous Signs Immediately Following The Great Tribulation Announcing The Parousia, The Appearance of The Son of Man in the shaped-clouds (Mt. 24:29,30; Mk. 13:24-26; Lk. 25-28).
- (1) Sun, Moon, and Constellations greatly Affected Shall Produce Twenty-four hour Darkness (Mt. 24:29a; Mk. 13:24; Lk. 21:25a).
 - (2) Stars no longer held in orbit and miraculous powers in the Heavens shall be agitated (Mt. 24:29b; Mk. 13:25; Lk. 21:26b).
 - (3) Nations in Perplexity and Dismay because of loudly-booming and raging sea and humans suddenly dying from fear and dread in expectation of the things happening upon the inhabited Globe (Lk. 21:25 APT).
 - (4) The Miraculous Sign of The Son of Man (Mt. 24:30): The Star of Jacob (Num. 24:17), The Star of the King of The Jews, 'His Star' (Mt. 2:2), the star that shone both day and night to guide the Magi to Jerusalem first, and then to Bethlehem right over where 'The Little Child,' Jesus was being (Mt. 2:9).

In late nineteen hundreds in The Fels Planetarium of The Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, PA annually in the month of December several times a day 'The Christmas Star' was demonstrated astronomically for its re-occurrence. It was noted that it occurs rarely after at least more than two millenniums apart. It occurred before the birth of Moses (c. 1700 B.C. as well as again at the birth of Christ (Tebet - Dec.-Jan., 4. B.C.). Now the constellation Virgo

and the star Coma the son of the virgin, formed by the conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn resulting in a bright star that can be seen in both nighttime and daytime. This occurred before the birth of Moses and The Lord Jesus Christ and are to be expected to occur again before The Lord Jesus Christ returns to Earth to set up His Kingdom. These planets are being closely watched by astronomers. This astronomical study has been observed who found no controvertible evidence by the Bible Scholar and author, Joseph A. Seiss in *The Gospel in the Stars*, first published in 1882 by E. Claxton & Company, Phila., PA and reprinted, 1972.

Here on Mount Olivet The Lord Jesus Christ has indicated that His Star shall appear again as another Miraculous Sign of The Son of Man.

- g. Finally, all the tribes of the Earth shall bewail-beating-the-breast. After all the occurrences and finally recognition of the sign of The Son of Man will create consternation and fearful anticipation of The God's wrath and cause them to intently bewail and lose heart. Then will the Lord Jesus descend from Heaven in shaped-clouds and send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet to gather His elect ones. who responded to the gospel of The Kingdom, from the extremities of Earth as far as an extremity of Heaven (Mk. 13:26,27; Mt. 24:31; Lk. 21:27).

Conclusion: Today we continued to consider The Lord Jesus Christ's teaching and prophesy upon The Mount of Olives. We reviewed His answers to the first two questions the disciples asked after He sat down upon the Mount of Olives directly in view of The Temple. Today we considered His answer to the third question asked by Peter, James, and John concerning what signs for which to look when the consummation of the age will occur. We noted the Seven Signs that Alert the Saints to the Nearness of the End of the Age and the five Miraculous Signs that shall immediately follow three and a-half years of Great Tribulation. We particularly noted the fourth Miraculous Sign, Como The Star of the Son of Man, being nourished. This star in its brightness is formed by the alignment of Jupiter and Saturn thus magnifying the brightness of the light being generated thereby. When this sign is seen on Earth The Lord Jesus descends in shaped clouds to conquer and set up His Millennial Kingdom. His angels shall be ordered to gather His elect ones, who responded to the gospel of The Kingdom, from the extremities of Earth as far as an extremity of Heaven.

The warning that Jesus gave to His disciples to which we need to give earnest heed is, "Constantly-beware that not anyone mislead you&! Be-vigilant!"

Are you, am I, prepared, ready, being vigilant, and anxiously looking for His shout in the air to be taken up with Him forevermore first in Heaven, then to descend with Him to Earth to reign with Him in The Millennium and thereafter for Eternity?

Application: Beginning today what steps will you and I take to be prepared and anxious to meet Him in the air?

Dr. Fred Wittman

For next week: **Read and meditate upon: Jesus' Final Day of Public Teaching** (First Watch of Night c. 7:15 P.M.): **The Parable of the Fig Tree** (Mt. 24:32-36; Mk. 13:28-33; Lk. 21:29-36).