

# Behold the Lamb: The Final Days: The End of the Age Matthew 24:1-8 FBC

Canton Sunday am March 22, 2026

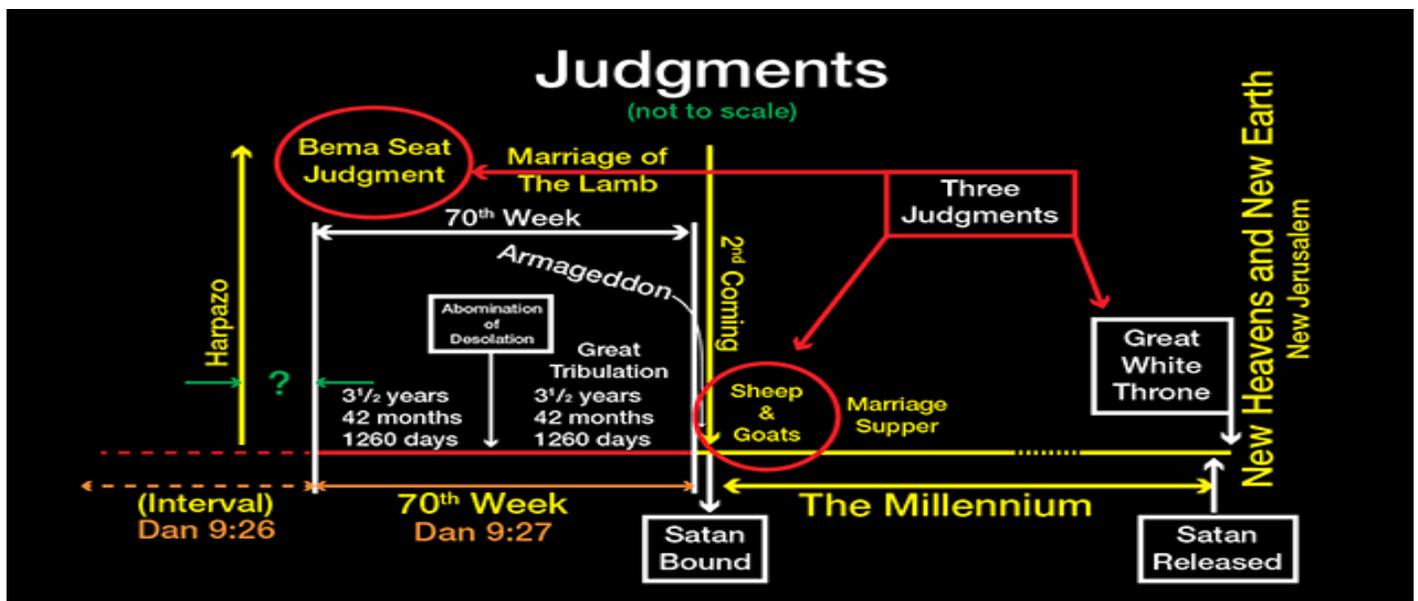
**Introduction: Why does God give us so many warnings of the end?**

**Prophets have warned us. Nahum 1:2-3**

God is jealous, and the LORD avenges;  
The LORD avenges and is furious.  
The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries,  
And He reserves wrath for His enemies;  
3 The LORD is slow to anger and great in power,  
And will not at all acquit the wicked.

**Progressive judgments warn us. Revelation 16:1**

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."



**God's holy love necessitates his wrath.**

In order for God to be loving and holy he must judge sin...eventually.

Heed the warnings...salvation now..

- I. **Because that temple was literally destroyed, these prophecies are literal.**
  - V. 1-4
    - a. **Not one stone left. 70 A.D.**

d. **Not one stone shall be left here upon another:** Some 40 years after Jesus said this, there was a widespread Jewish revolution against the Romans in Palestine, and they enjoyed many early

successes. But ultimately Roman soldiers crushed the rebels. In AD 70 Jerusalem was leveled, including the temple — just as Jesus said would happen.

i. “Titus (it is said) would have preserved the temple, as one of the world’s wonders, from being burnt, but could not; such was the fury of his soldiers, set a-work by God doubtless.” (Trapp)

ii. It is said that at the fall of Jerusalem, the last surviving Jews of the city fled to the temple, because it was the strongest and most secure building in the city. Roman soldiers surrounded it, and one drunken soldier started a fire that soon engulfed the whole building. Ornate gold detail work in the roof melted down in the cracks between the stone walls of the temple, and to retrieve the gold, the Roman commander ordered that the temple be dismantled stone by stone. The destruction was so complete that today they have true difficulty learning exactly where the foundation of the temple was.

iii. “Josephus says the stones were white and strong; fifty feet long, twenty-four broad, and sixteen thick. Antiq. b. 15. c. xi.” (Clarke)

e. **That shall not be thrown down**: This prophecy was fulfilled literally. There was a real temple, and it was really destroyed. The literal fulfillment of this prophecy establishes the tone for the rest of the prophecies in the chapter. We should expect a literal fulfillment for these as well.

**i. They had already seen the glory, now they want the rest of the story. V. 3, Mathew 17**

i. Peter and Andrew, James and John. Luke’s gospel.

**b. Your age will end and this age will end. V. 3**

- i. All 4 died horrible deaths.
1. Peter...crucified upside down.
  2. Andrew...crucified.
  3. James...beheaded by Herod in Jerusalem.
  4. John...survived boiled in oil and then died naturally.

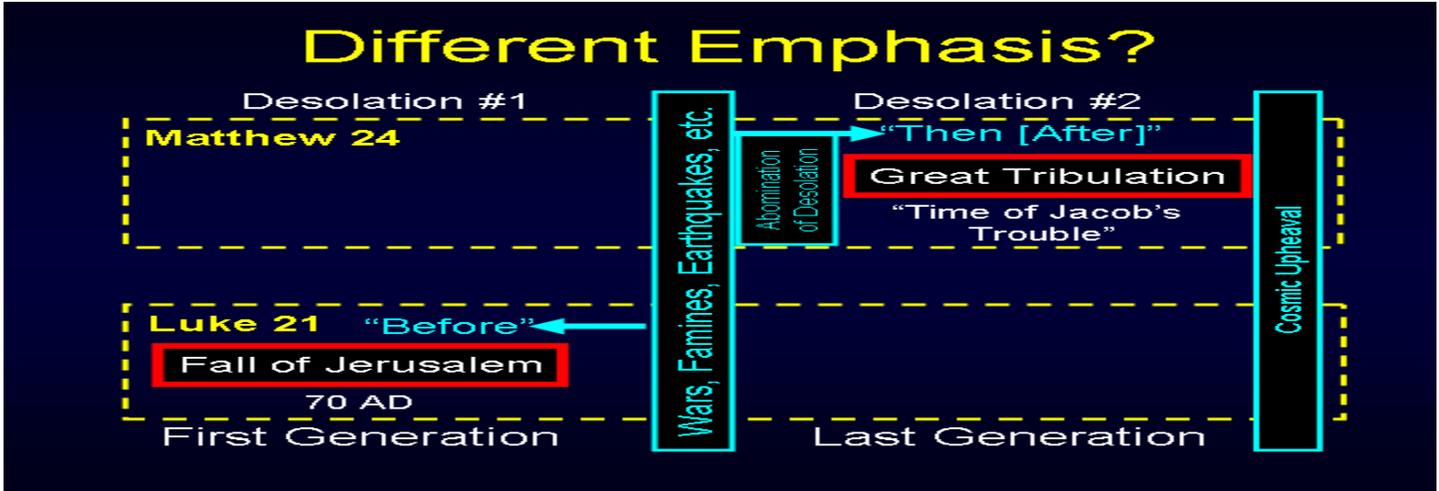
AND AS IT IS APPOINTED  
UNTO MEN ONCE TO  
DIE, BUT AFTER THIS THE  
JUDGMENT:

*HEBREWS 9:27 KJV*

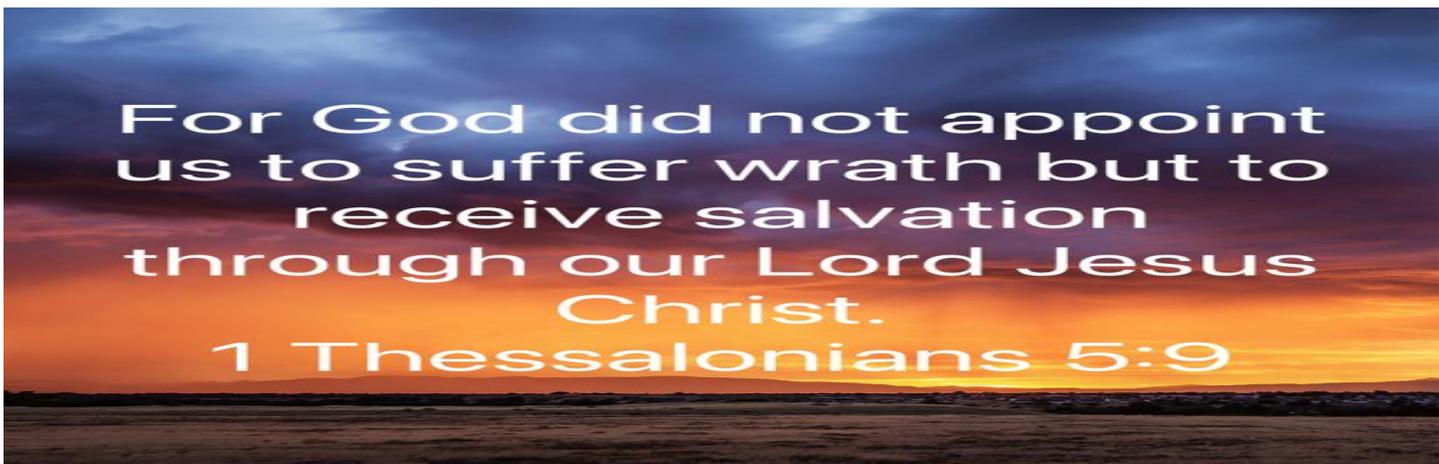
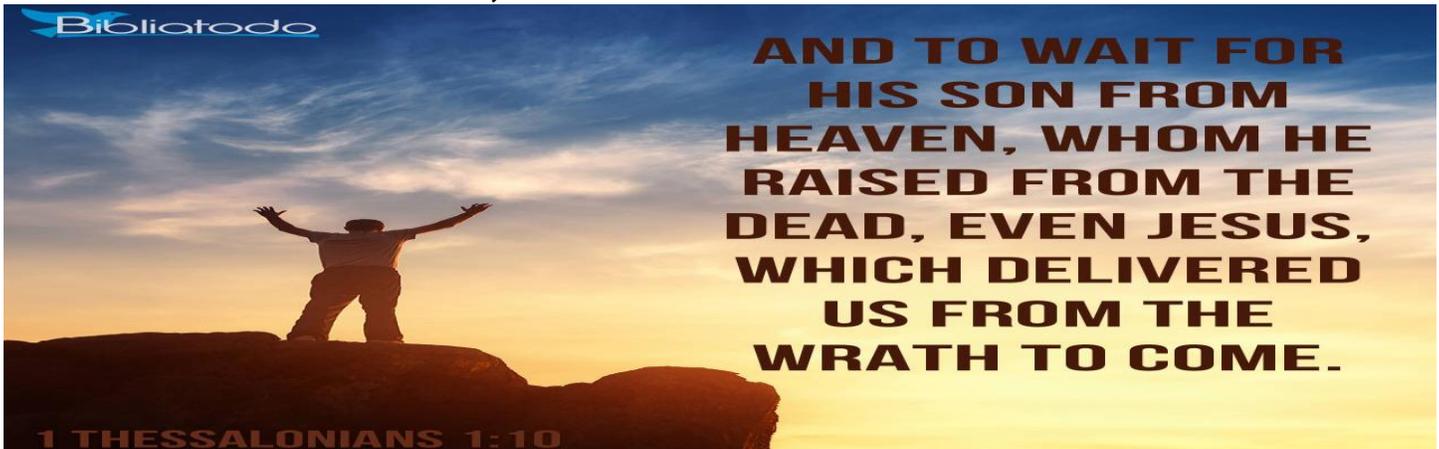
**i. God is in control of both.**

d. Deception is rampant, truth is absolute. V. 4  
 i. Men think they know better than God. Psalm 52

“The best way to prepare for deception is to fill your mind and heart with the truths of Scripture. When you know the authenticity of God’s Word, you won’t easily fall for counterfeits.” – Charles Stanley



II. There are many signs of His coming, none for our removal. V. 5-8, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9



a. **Beginning of the birth pains, but it is not time for the birth yet.**

## The Beginning of Sorrows

|                        | <b>Matthew</b> | <b>Luke</b> | <b>Revelation</b> |
|------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------------|
| • <b>False Christs</b> | 24:4-5         | 21:8        | 6:1-2             |
| • <b>Wars</b>          | 24:6           | 21:9,10     | 6:3-4             |
| • <b>Famines</b>       | 24:7a          | 21:11       | 6:5-6             |
| • <b>Pestilences</b>   | 24:7b-8        | 21:12       | 6:7-8             |
| • <b>Earthquakes</b>   | 24:9           | 21:24       | 6:12              |
| <b>Cosmic Upheaval</b> | 24:10-13       | 21:25       | 6:12-17           |

i. **They increase in frequency, intensity and clarity.**

### 1. **False messiahs.**

The Bible warns of false prophets, teachers and Messiahs throughout the Old Testament and New Testament. Throughout history we can see that many cult leaders have claimed to be Messiah.

For example, Arnold Potter, who referred to himself as Potter Christ was a leader of the Latter-Day Saints;

William Davies, also a leader of the Latter-Day Saints declared himself to be God the Father and his first son as Jesus Christ incarnate;

Sun Myung Moon was a self-proclaimed Messiah. Moon was a leader in the Unification Church.;

Alan John Miller (A.J. Miller) and his partner, part of the Jehovah Witness cult, claim to be the reincarnate Messiah and Mary Magdalene.

While these are just a few of the thousands that have claimed to be Jesus Christ or God, many people have fallen prey to their schemes. The majority of the men/women proclaiming to be Christ died either by suicide or various other means of a violent

death. As we are in the End Times we can expect many more people to rise up and claim to be the counterfeit Messiah as scripture adamantly warns:

Another well-known figure is David Koresh, the leader of the Branch Davidians in the early 1990s. Koresh, who claimed to be the final prophet and a messianic figure, led his followers to a compound in Waco, Texas. His teachings fused elements of Christianity with apocalyptic prophecy, which attracted a devout following. The standoff with federal agents that culminated in tragedy underscores the dangerous potential when charismatic leaders begin to draw parallels to Christ.

Similarly, in the Philippines, a man named Apollo Quiboloy claims to be "The Appointed Son of God," asserting that he embodies Jesus Christ's presence on Earth. His ministry, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, has gained a large following despite facing legal challenges and accusations of abuse.

## **2. Wars.**

- a. Only 289 years of human history with no wars.

## **3. Famines.**

Here are 10 of the worst famines in history:

1. Irish Potato Famine (1845/1852) - Caused by a potato blight, it led to the deaths of millions and significant emigration
2. Great Chinese Famine (1959/1961) - Resulted in millions of deaths due to political policies and droughts.
3. Persian Famine (1917/1919) - Caused by droughts and political instability, leading to wide spread suffering.
4. North Korean Famine (1990s) - Resulted in millions dying due to government policies and food shortages.
5. Bengal Famine (1943) - Caused by wartime inflation and poor governance, resulting in 2-3 million deaths.
6. Holodomor (1932-1933) - A state-ordered famine in Ukraine that resulted in millions dying.
7. Chalisa Famine (1783/1784) - Caused by droughts and political unrest, leading to significant loss of life.
8. Indian Famine of 1876/1878 - Caused by droughts and poor governance, leading to widespread suffering.
9. Great Famine of 1315-1317 - Affects Europe, leading to significant demographic changes.
10. Ethiopian Famine (1983-1985) Caused by droughts and political instability, leading to widespread suffering. These famines have had profound effects on the populations affected and have shaped the history of the regions they occurred in.

## **4. Pestilences.**

- a. **Man-made=Covid**
- b. **Fallen-world falling apart.**

## **5. Earthquakes.**

Updated: Mar 18, 2026 11:49 GMT - 48 minutes ago

Find out whether seismic activity worldwide has increased or decreased, see detailed charts and tables on current or yearly average number of quakes, their magnitude distribution, as well as stats on which countries or cities have had most earthquakes.

[Top 20 Quakes](#)

[Latest Quakes](#)

In the past 3 days, there have been worldwide 3,497 quakes of magnitudes up to 5.8:

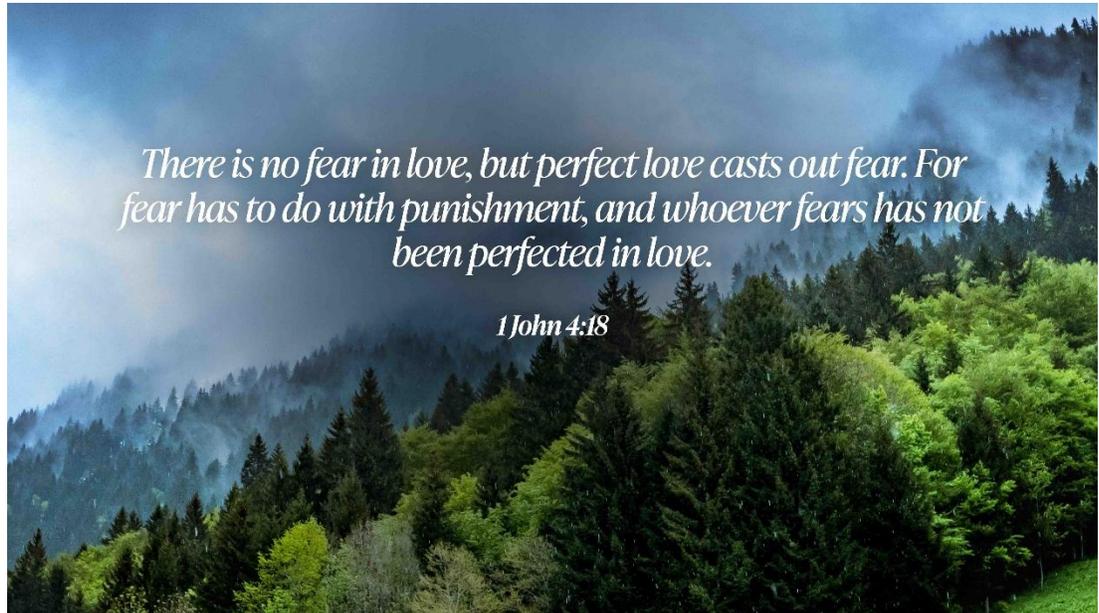
- 9 quakes above magnitude 5
- 135 quakes between magnitude 4 and 5
- 373 quakes between magnitude 3 and 4
- 1,040 quakes between magnitude 2 and 3
- 1,940 quakes below magnitude 2 that people normally don't feel.

### **Conclusion: How do we live?**

- 1. We are of the day; aware. I Thessalonians 5:4**
- 2. We warn of the wrath to come. Matthew 3:7**
- 3. We pray for his kingdom to come. Matthew 6:10**
- 4. We don't have fatalism, just evangelism. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11**

Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men ; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

### **5. We do not fear. I John 4:18**



i.

The Bible warns of false prophets, teachers and Messiahs throughout the Old Testament and New Testament. Throughout history we can see that many cult leaders have claimed to be Messiah. For example, Arnold Potter, who referred to himself as Potter Christ was a leader of the Latter Day Saints; William Davies, also a leader of the Latter Day Saints declared himself to be God the Father and his first son as Jesus Christ incarnate; Sun Myung Moon was a self proclaimed Messiah. Moon was a leader in the Unification Church.; Alan John Miller (A.J. Miller) and his partner, part of the Jehovah Witness cult, claim to be the reincarnate Messiah and Mary Magdalene. While these are just a few of the thousands that have claimed to be Jesus Christ or God, many people have fallen prey to their schemes. The majority of the men/women proclaiming to be Christ died either by suicide or various other means of a violent death. As we are in the End Times we can expect many more people to rise up and claim to be the counterfeit Messiah as scripture adamantly warns:

## **Messianic Claimants in History**

One of the most notable historical figures to claim divinity was Sabbatai Zevi in the 17th century. A Jewish mystic, he declared himself the Messiah, causing a massive upheaval among Jewish communities across Europe and the Middle East. Zevi's movement garnered significant followers until he converted to Islam under duress, which led to disillusionment among his followers but also to the rise of a new sect, the Sabbateans. His claim exemplifies how societal turmoil and longing for redemption can fuel messianic expectations.

Another well-known figure is David Koresh, the leader of the Branch Davidians in the early 1990s. Koresh, who claimed to be the final prophet and a messianic figure, led his followers to a compound in Waco, Texas. His teachings fused elements of Christianity with

apocalyptic prophecy, which attracted a devout following. The standoff with federal agents that culminated in tragedy underscores the dangerous potential when charismatic leaders begin to draw parallels to Christ.

## **Contemporary Claims**

In more contemporary times, several individuals have stepped forward claiming to be Jesus, often garnering media attention and social media followings. One such person was the Australian self-proclaimed messiah, Alan John Miller, who founded a movement based on his message of love and the belief that he is the reincarnation of Jesus. His teachings focus on personal spiritual development and have drawn hundreds of followers who resonate with his perspective on love and personal truth.

Similarly, in the Philippines, a man named Apollo Quiboloy claims to be "The Appointed Son of God," asserting that he embodies Jesus Christ's presence on Earth. His ministry, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, has gained a large following despite facing legal challenges and accusations of abuse. Quiboloy's assertions illustrate the complexity surrounding religious identity and authority in modern society.

# **5 People Who Claimed to Be the Second Coming of Jesus**

Though scores of people have claimed to be the Second Coming of Jesus, fewer were able to establish followings that survived their deaths.



Published: Feb 27, 2026 written by [Michael Huffman](#), *ThM Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, MDiv*

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According to the New Testament, Jesus promised that he would return again someday to establish his visible reign on Earth. But when was this to happen? How was he to be recognized? What form would he take? Lingering, unanswered questions have left the door open to a growing number of people claiming to be the Second Coming of Christ. Sometimes, these claims are overt and literal. But other times, they are more nuanced, spiritualized, and esoteric. Here are five people who claimed to be Jesus—in one form or another—and who retain large followings today.

# Jesus's Second Coming (or Return) Can Mean Different Things

The Ascension, by John Singleton Copley, 1775. Source: Boston Museum of Fine Arts

The idea of Christ's return does not mean the same thing for everyone. The concept varies from being something like reincarnation to being the literal, physical presence of Christ. It should be kept in mind that, when people claim to be the return of Jesus, their conception of the phenomenon is usually a combination of various ideas borrowed from different religious traditions.

It can understandably be assumed that people who claim to be Jesus would appear in majority-Christian cultures. Indeed, this is usually the case. However, [Islam also teaches that Jesus will someday return to inaugurate the “Last Hour,”](#) when God’s servants will defeat the enemies of the faithful and bring about an era of peace and justice on Earth. But claiming to be [Jesus](#) in an Islamic setting carries different implications than doing so in a Christian setting. While the majority of Christians believe that Jesus is God incarnate, Muslims emphatically reject the idea that God could become a human being. Thus, while not always the case, many people who have claimed to be Jesus have also claimed divine status. In a Muslim setting, however, claiming to be Jesus returned to Earth means claiming prophethood only.

Having noted this, it is important to add that, for Muslims, the status of a prophet is much higher than what most Christians would afford to any human being besides Jesus. Thus, a person claiming to be Jesus in Islam, while perhaps not as audacious as it would be in a Christian context, is nevertheless a daring assertion.

## 1. Mirza Husayn Ali (1817–1892), Founder of the Baha’i Faith

Mirza Husayn Ali, “Baha’u’llah,” 1868. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Despite having been established less than two centuries ago, the Baha’i faith is considered [a world religion today](#). With between 7 and 8 million adherents, Baha’is can be found in countries all over the world. Its founder, named Mirza Husayn Ali but honored with the title Baha’u’llah—“Glory of God”—is viewed by Baha’is as the spiritual return of Christ.

The story of Baha’u’llah must begin with that of a man named Siyyid Ali-Muhammad, who later became “the Bab,” which means “the Gate.” The Bab and Baha’u’llah were contemporaries in early 19th-century [Persia](#), where [Shi’a Islam](#) was the dominant religion.

Bahai Temple in India, by P. Nagarajan, 2007. Source: Wikimedia Commons

According to tradition, the Bab had many dreams and visions as a child and was sometimes able to speak accurately of things in the real world that he had only witnessed by divine revelation. His awareness that he was receiving divine messages increased until, on May 22, 1844, he disclosed to a mullah (an Islamic scholar) named Husayn that he was God’s “bab”—God’s gateway—for a coming “manifestation of God.”

While the Baha’i faith, properly speaking, would not begin for almost two decades after this event, this date is seen as the beginning of Babism (a religion that still exists but was mostly absorbed by the Baha’i faith later). A “Manifestation of God” in Baha’i tradition means [a prophet](#). Biblical

figures such as Adam, [Abraham](#), and Moses carry this status, but religious figures such as [Zoroaster](#), Krishna, and [Gautama the Buddha](#) from non-Abrahamic faiths share it as well.

The Bab assembled a group of 18 disciples and sent them throughout Persia and neighboring regions to spread his message. But as his following grew into the tens of thousands, conflicts with local, orthodox Islamic leaders led to violent clashes, and thousands of Babis were killed. The Bab himself was finally executed by firing squad in Tabríz, Iran, on July 9, 1850.

## **Baha’u’llah Is Considered a Spiritual—Not Literal—Return of Christ**

Baha’i Temple of Uganda in Kisaasi, by Jameswasswa, 2016. Source: Wikimedia Commons

After the Bab’s violent death, his movement was nearly crushed. But some of his followers managed to hold out hope. While about 25 people claimed in the years afterward to be the “Manifestation of God” of which he had spoken, only one would prove widely persuasive.

Mirza Husayn Ali had joined the Babi movement as a young man. Due to his association with the Bab, he was forced to move repeatedly throughout his adult life and was finally imprisoned in Tehran in 1851, where he suffered torture for four months. It was during this time that he began to experience divine revelations, one of which said that he was the Manifestation of God the Bab had foretold would come, and that he was the “Glory of God”—Baha’u’llah. But it was not until April of 1863 that he finally disclosed these revelations to a small group of family members and confidants in Baghdad. This event is seen by Baha’i people as the official founding of their religion. Baha’u’llah spent his entire adult life in exile, prison, or under house arrest. But persecution facilitated the rapid spread of his movement.

The Bahai Temple in Haifa, Israel, by Dani Lavi 0007, 2014. Source: Wikimedia Commons

The parallel between the Bab and Baha’u’llah’s relationship to that of John the Baptist and Jesus is not to be overlooked. But, there is also an important Islamic parallel to be made. According to Islam, Jesus’s return will be preceded by a time of struggle against an antichrist figure called the Dajjal. The Mahdi (the last “imam” according to Shi’a Islam) will lead this struggle, which will culminate in the return of Jesus and his final war against the Dajjal. The persons of the Bab and Baha’u’llah, thus, also parallel the Mahdi and Jesus in the “Last Hour” of Islam. But, in Baha’i, these events are given a spiritual meaning.

## **2. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908), Founder of Ahmadiyya Islam**

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, ca. 1897. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Another remarkably fast-growing religious movement from a 19th-century Islamic context that was founded by a person associating himself with the Second Coming of Jesus is the Ahmadiyya Movement. Unlike the Baha'i faith, the Ahmadiyya movement does not identify as a religion separate from Islam. Most Muslims, however, consider them a heretical group.

The founder of this movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was born in Qadian, a small village in the Punjab region of India. Though he studied the Qur'an and Arabic as a child, his father wanted him to seek a secular career. But Ahmad was interested in religious pursuits and spent his time in study and prayer, becoming an accomplished debater and defender of Islam in the region. While he had allegedly experienced dreams and visions since childhood, Ahmad began to claim that God had a special calling for him in 1882. But his movement was not formally established until March 23, 1889, when forty of his followers took an oath of allegiance to him and his teachings.

Jujeidayiri Ahmadiyya Central Mosque, by Isaac Gyemfi, 2023. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Unlike Baha'u'llah and the Bab, Ahmad claimed to be, in one person, not only the second coming of the Messiah but also of the Mahdi. But similarly to Baha'i belief about Baha'u'llah, adherents to Ahmadiyya Islam believe that Ahmad is the fulfillment of the promised return of many great religious figures, not just Jesus.

An important feature of Ahmad's teaching was that, after Jesus escaped crucifixion and ascended to Heaven, he descended again to Srinagar, in Kashmir, India, where he married, had children, and died a natural death. Tourists may visit his tomb there today. Ahmadiyya Muslims believe that Ahmad is not merely Jesus symbolically, but that he is truly Christ on earth. While not *physically* the Jesus of 1st-century Palestine, he is nevertheless the true, spiritual fulfillment of the promise of Christ's return.

### **3. Sun Myung Moon (1920–2012), Founder of the Unification Church**

Sun Myung Moon speaks, Las Vegas, 2010. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Sun Myung Moon was born in Japanese-occupied [Korea](#) and witnessed that nation's cataclysmic transformation and division after World War II. Once [Korea was split into North and South](#), he and his family found themselves in the North, under Soviet Communist control. Moon, at that time a Presbyterian whose ideas about his own messianic status were still emerging, was caught up in the Communist persecution that ensued in North Korea. He was imprisoned and, by his own testimony, tortured in Pyongyang.

After spending over two years in the Hungnam labor camp, he was liberated by U.N. troops. His experiences of suffering under Communism made him a champion of what he understood as Western values. At the heart of his ideology was the family, and his movement later gained notoriety for the mass marriages that he arranged and blessed. Marriage became a central theme of the movement he established.

According to Moon, he had a vision at 15 years old, in which Jesus appeared to him to give him a mission. Eventually, he would claim not only to have heard from Jesus, but also to *be* the Second Coming of Christ.

Collective Wedding Officiated by Sun Myung Moon, 1982. Source: Wikimedia Commons

In 1954, Moon founded what is now called the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, popularly called simply “the Unification Church.” In a spiritual sense, Moon and his wife, Hak Ja Ha Moon, are considered, together, to be the Second Coming of Jesus according to the church’s officially stated belief. They are also celebrated as the parents of all of humanity by their followers. The Unification Church has up to three million members worldwide today.

After Sun Myung Moon died in 2012, Hak Ja Ha Moon became the leader of the church. She is presently facing charges of bribery in South Korea. The Moon family is exceptionally active in promoting Conservative, anti-communist political ideology in Korea, the USA, and elsewhere.

## 4. Hulon Mitchell Jr. (1935–2007), Founder of The Nation of Yahweh

The Last Judgment, by Hans Memling, ca. 1466–73. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Hulon Mitchell Jr. was born in Enid, Oklahoma, USA. His father was a Christian pastor, and his mother was a church pianist. Mitchell served in the US Army and then studied economics at university. After a time of involvement in the Nation of Islam, he became a Christian faith healer. In 1978, he arrived in [Miami, Florida](#), a city shaken by racialized violence. Proclaiming himself a Black Messiah, he established the Nation of Yahweh in 1979.

Following a trend gaining some popularity in his day that called Black Americans “Hebrew Israelites,” Mitchell’s interpretation of biblical history was heavily racialized. He taught that Black people are the true descendants of ancient Israel, and even that God himself is Black. The cosmic battle between good and evil was reflected visibly, in his view, in conflicts between Black people, on the side of good, and white and Jewish people on the side of evil.

This is the Devil Black Jesus sign protest by Black Hebrew Israelites at San Diego, by Cory Doctorow, 2023. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Mitchell changed his name to Yahweh ben Yahweh, using the Hebrew name of God from [the Bible](#), to designate himself as the “Son of God.” Unlike some others who have claimed to be the return of Christ, Mitchell identified himself as God in the flesh. Though he died in 2007, his followers believe that he is still alive, having ascended to his Father, God. Though the Nation of Yahweh once claimed to have 10,000 members in the 1980s, it is estimated that there are about 1,000 adherents today.

Yahweh ben Yahweh spent over a decade in prison after he was convicted of crimes related to malfeasance, and conspiracy in the murder of 14 members of the Nation of Yahweh who had fallen out of favor with his sect.

## 5. Sergei Torop (1961–), “Vissarion,” Founder of the Church of the Last Testament

Vissarion (Sergei Torop), by Ekaterina Dawn, 2020. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Correlating with the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had systematically suppressed religious expression, the late 1980s and 1990s, Russia saw the emergence of numerous small, heterodox religious movements. But few were as successful as that of Sergei Torop, who renamed himself “Vissarion” in 1992 and later founded what is sometimes said to be the largest religious commune in the world. This is remarkable, since Vissarion’s sect is not supported by any larger religious movement.

Torop was born near Krasnodar, [Russia](#), and was reportedly an artistic child who had a knack for leading others. After completing his mandatory military service, he eventually became a traffic police officer. But after leaving this job in 1989, the year the [Soviet Union ended](#), he embarked on a personal spiritual quest that involved extreme fasting. During this time, he reports that he realized his body had been inhabited by the spirit of Christ. He began teaching that he was the reincarnation of Jesus, beginning in the town of Minusinsk. He renamed himself Vissarion (meaning, “one who gives life”) in 1991 and established, along with his believers, the Church of the Last Testament, named after his emerging collection of writings. His commune, “Abode of the Dawn,” was opened in the Taiga forest of Siberia in 1995.

Vissarion Blessing, by Ekaterina Dawn, 2015. Source: Wikimedia Commons

At its peak in the early 2000s, it was estimated that Vissarion had as many as 10,000 followers worldwide. But, due in part to outside scrutiny and legal woes, that estimated figure has been reduced by about half. Between 1,000-2,000 people live at Abode of the Dawn today.

In 2020, Torop was arrested on charges related to the misuse of his followers’ assets and harm to their well-being they experienced. As of June 2025, he is serving a twelve-year sentence in a prison camp. The full impact of this on his movement remains to be seen.

# David Guzik

## Study Guide for Matthew 24

### JESUS' OLIVET DISCOURSE

#### A. The destruction of the temple and its implications.

##### 1. ([Matthew 24:1-2](#)) Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple.

**Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”**

a. **Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple:** Jesus would contend no more with the religious leaders, and never again come to the temple in His earthly ministry. With emphasis, He **went out and departed**.

- i. **Went out and departed:** “There is an emphasis on the idea of the verb. He was going away, like one who did not mean to return.” (Bruce)
- ii. “They came to their Master, going before in a deeply preoccupied mood, and tried to change the gloomy current of His thoughts by inviting Him to look back at the sacred structure.” (Bruce)

b. **His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple:** After the destruction of Solomon’s temple, this temple was originally built by Zerubbabel and Ezra ([Ezra 6:15](#)). Herod the Great (who ruled when Jesus was born) greatly expanded and improved it. This temple was the center of Jewish life for almost a thousand years — so much so, that it was customary to swear by the temple ([Matthew 23:16](#)), and speaking against the temple could be considered blasphemy ([Acts 6:13](#)).

- i. “Josephus the Jew (Antiquities 15.14) tells us that for eight whole years together he kept 10,000 men a-work about it; and that for magnificence and stateliness, it exceeded Solomon’s temple.” (Trapp)
- ii. After Herod’s work, the temple was huge: nearly 500 yards or meters long and 400 yards or meters wide. Herod’s plan for rebuilding started in 19 B.C. and was only completed in A.D. 63, taking more than 80 years. The temple was finished only seven years before it was destroyed.

iii. But the Second Temple wasn't just big; it was also beautiful. The Jewish historian Josephus said that the temple was covered with gold plates, and when the sun shone on them it was blinding to look at. Where there was no gold, there were blocks of marble of such a pure white that from a distance strangers thought there was snow on the temple.

c. **Do you not see all these things?** The disciples wanted Jesus to look at the beautiful **buildings**; Jesus told them to turn around and take a good look at those **things**.

i. "These **things**, not building, implying indifference to the splendours admired by the disciples." (Bruce)

d. **Not one stone shall be left here upon another**: Some 40 years after Jesus said this, there was a widespread Jewish revolution against the Romans in Palestine, and they enjoyed many early successes. But ultimately Roman soldiers crushed the rebels. In AD 70 Jerusalem was leveled, including the temple — just as Jesus said would happen.

i. "Titus (it is said) would have preserved the temple, as one of the world's wonders, from being burnt, but could not; such was the fury of his soldiers, set a-work by God doubtless." (Trapp)

ii. It is said that at the fall of Jerusalem, the last surviving Jews of the city fled to the temple, because it was the strongest and most secure building in the city. Roman soldiers surrounded it, and one drunken soldier started a fire that soon engulfed the whole building. Ornate gold detail work in the roof melted down in the cracks between the stone walls of the temple, and to retrieve the gold, the Roman commander ordered that the temple be dismantled stone by stone. The destruction was so complete that today they have true difficulty learning exactly where the foundation of the temple was.

iii. "Josephus says the stones were white and strong; fifty feet long, twenty-four broad, and sixteen thick. Antiq. b. 15. c. xi." (Clarke)

e. **That shall not be thrown down**: This prophecy was fulfilled literally. There was a real temple, and it was really destroyed. The literal fulfillment of this prophecy establishes the tone for the rest of the prophecies in the chapter. We should expect a literal fulfillment for these as well.

i. "We may also observe how little God values splendid houses of prayer when they are made dens of thieves." (Poole)

2. (**Matthew 24:3**) Jesus' prediction brings up two questions.

**Now 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?”**

a. **As He sat on the Mount of Olives:** Removed from the temple, yet overlooking it, the disciples asked Jesus questions about His bold prediction concerning the destruction of the temple.

i. It was an appropriate time for such a discourse. The religious leaders rejected Jesus, and would soon deliver Him to the Romans for crucifixion. He knew the bitter fate awaiting Jerusalem, and He wanted to give hope and confidence to His disciples who would soon be greatly tested.

b. **When will these things be?** Jesus said the temple would be completely destroyed. It was logical that the disciples wanted to know when it would happen. Jesus will speak to this question, but only in the context of answering their next two questions.

c. **And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?** The disciples probably thought they asked only one question. In their minds, the destruction of the temple and the **end of the age** were probably connected. But really, they asked two questions (some say three), and this second question is answered in the remainder of the chapter.

i. “The disciples did not so tabulate their questions. In all probability they presented them as one request, supposing that all these things would happen simultaneously. Jesus’ answer was directed mainly to correct this misapprehension.” (Morgan)

ii. It may also be that this second question was asked as they remembered the events surrounding the first temple’s destruction: Solomon’s Temple was destroyed in the context of national judgment and exile.

d. **And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?** As Jesus answers this important second question, He will make many specific comments and predictions about the end times. These predictions have been the source of significant disagreement among Christians who have tried to understand them. Why didn’t Jesus simply say it so clearly that there was no possibility anyone could misunderstand Him?

i. One reason why prophecy may seem vague or imprecise is because God wants every age to have reasons to be ready for Jesus’ return. We should not think of Jesus’ return as an event far off on a time line, but something we have been running parallel with since the day of Pentecost.

- ii. Others suggest that God's intention was to keep the future somewhat vague and clouded to confound the Devil, even as the resurrection of the Messiah was vague in the Old Testament.
- iii. Though some prophetic interpretations are different, we are sure of this: *He is coming again*, and we must be ready.

## B. The flow of history until Jesus' return.

1. ([Matthew 24:4-8](#)) Jesus describes general world conditions during the period between His Ascension and the time immediately preceding His second coming.

**And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these *are* the beginning of sorrows."**

a. **Take heed that no one deceives you:** From the outset, Jesus warned the disciples that many would be deceived as they anticipated His return. There have been times in the history of the church when rash predictions were made and then relied upon resulting in great disappointment, disillusionment, and falling away.

i. One notable example of this was the prophetic expectation in 1844 with William Miller in the United States. Because of his prophetic interpretations, calculations, and publications, there were hundreds of thousands in the United States who were convinced that Jesus would return in 1844. When He did not, there was great disappointment, with some falling away, and some cultic groups spawned from the prophetic fervor.

b. **See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet:** The kind of things Jesus mentions in this section are *not* the things that mark specific signs of the end. Things like false messiahs, **wars**, **famines, pestilences, and earthquakes** have certainly marked man's history since the time of Jesus' Ascension — but were not specific signs of the end. In effect Jesus said, "Catastrophes will happen, but these will not signal the end."

i. In the midst of any great war or any great famine or any great earthquake, it is natural to believe that the world is coming to an end. But Jesus said there is a far more specific sign that would indicate His return, and He describes this later.

ii. "One clear aim of this chapter is to prevent *premature excitement* about the parousia." (France)

c. **All these are the beginning of sorrows**: Though none of those events are the specific sign of the end, collectively they **are** a sign. When Jesus described these calamities as **the beginning of sorrows**, He literally called them *the beginning of labor pains*. Just as is true with labor pains, we should expect that the things mentioned — **wars**, **famines**, **earthquakes**, and so on — would become *more frequent* and *more intense* before the return of Jesus — without any one of them being the specific sign of the end.

i. "The *beginning*: such an accumulation of horrors might well appear to the inexperienced the end, hence the remark to prevent panic." (Bruce)

## The Bible Says Matthew 24:1-3 Meaning

The parallel gospel account of [Matthew 24:1-3](#) is found in [Mark 13:1-4](#) and [Luke 21:5-7](#).

This chapter begins Matthew's fifth and final record of [Jesus](#)'s discourses. It extends through chapter 24 and 25 and is called "The Olivet Discourse." The previous four discourses in Matthew were "The Sermon on the Mount" ([Matthew 5:3-7:27](#)), "The Missionary Discourse" ([Matthew 10:5-10:42](#)), "The Parabolic Discourse" ([Matthew 13:1-35](#)), and "The Discourse on the Church" ([Matthew 18](#)). [Matthew 24-25](#) is called "The Olivet Discourse" because [Jesus](#) delivered it to His *disciples* *as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives* (v 3). The *Mount of Olives* is a ridge a short walking distance from Jerusalem, with roughly a 300 foot rise in elevation above the city.

Since His triumphal entry into Jerusalem for the Passover a few days earlier ([Matthew 21:6-11](#)), [Jesus](#) had, for the past several days, publicly taught and healed on *the temple* grounds ([Matthew 21:14](#)). (See illustration of temple grounds in the Maps and Charts section on sidebar). During this time, He was repeatedly confronted and challenged by the religious leaders ([Matthew 21:23-22:45](#)). And He repeatedly humiliated them with His answers and parables, but they did not arrest Him because they feared the people who regarded [Jesus](#) as a prophet ([Matthew 21:46](#)).

Eventually, they lost their nerve and stopped asking Him questions altogether ([Matthew 22:46](#)). In His last public teaching before His death, [Jesus](#) severely chastised the scribes and Pharisees and issued a series of eight woes condemning them for their hypocrisy and malice ([Matthew 23:1-36](#)). [Jesus](#)'s final public words were a lamentation, acknowledging His people's rejection of Him as Messiah, and a prophecy from [Psalm 118](#) describing His triumphant return ([Matthew 23:37-39](#)).

After finishing the words of lamentation at the end of the previous chapter, *Jesus came out from the temple and was going away* (v 1), most likely to the nearby village of Bethany located on the far side of *the Mount of Olives*. This was where [He](#) apparently spent the night during His stay for Passover

([Mark 11:11-12](#); [Luke 21:37-38](#)). As *He was going*, *His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him* (v 1). Mark's account describes how they were marveling at the impressive buildings and wonderful stones ([Mark 13:1](#)). The *buildings* they were referring to was *the temple* of Herod the Great (Builder). His massive expansion and renovation of Ezra's *temple* was completed four decades earlier. To learn more about *the temple* please [see TheBibleSays' Tough Topics Article: "The Temple."](#)

*"Do you not see all these things?" Jesus* asked *them* (v 2).

It's fairly obvious that by *all these things* that *He* included *the temple buildings*. But significantly, *all these things* also included seeing *these temple buildings* within the context of what *Jesus* had just spoken *to them* and the crowds in *His* Messianic lamentation and prophecy ([Matthew 23:37-39](#)). The *disciples* saw *the temple buildings*, but they did *not see* them with understanding. So, *Jesus* began to explain *all these things to them*.

What *He* told *them* was startling.

Speaking from His own divine authority, *He* told *them*: *Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down* (v 2).

Herod's *temple* complex was sprawling. Its courtyards, porticos, and towering *buildings* covered an area that is roughly the size of three American football fields. That this entire magnificent complex, built by a king in great favor with mighty Rome, would be completely dismantled would have been incredibly difficult for the *disciples* to imagine.

And yet *Jesus*'s prophecy that *not one stone here will be left upon another* (v 2) was literally fulfilled by the Roman destruction. This took place in 70 A.D. roughly forty years, or one generation, after *Jesus* predicted it would happen. All that remains today of *the Temple* complex from *Jesus*'s time is part of the platform it used to sit on. An exposed portion of *the temple*'s foundation is known as the "Western" or "Wailing" Wall.

When *Jesus* and *His disciples* got *on* top of *the Mount of Olives* (v 3), *He* sat down, possibly to rest. *The Mount of Olives* is located just outside Jerusalem's city walls between *the temple* and the village of Bethany. Mark pointed out how *Jesus* and *His disciples* could see *the temple* from where *He was sitting* ([Mark 13:3](#)). *The Mount of Olives* rises roughly 300 feet in elevation above the city, so it presents a compelling vista, particularly of the temple mount which is just inside the eastern wall near *the Mount of Olives*. Perhaps *Jesus* sat to contemplate the lamentation for the city *He* loved, which had rejected Him.

As He was sitting, the disciples came to Him privately (v 3) to ask Him three questions. Mark identified that it was Peter, James, John, and Andrew who privately questioned Him (Mark 13:3). Interestingly, John would later describe in apocalyptic detail in the Book of Revelation about the same events which Jesus told him here while sitting on the Mount of Olives.

The disciples' three questions referred to Jesus's prediction of the destruction of the great temple works they were viewing, and were, in order:

1. When will these things happen?
2. What will be the sign of Your coming?
3. What will be the sign of the end of the age? (v 3).

Jesus answered these questions in inverse order, beginning with the third question.

The first question, "When will these things happen?" (v 3) follows directly from Jesus's statement to them about the dismantling of the magnificent temple complex. It is natural when a prediction like this is made for the listener to immediately seek to know "When will that happen?"

Jesus answered the disciples' first question in Matthew 24:32-51.

## Chuck Smith Sermon Notes for Matthew 24

World War.

Famines - Millions.

Pestilence - Flu 15,000,000.

Earthquakes - China 1920, Japan 1923.

vs. 37 Days of Noah.

Gen. 6:5 & 11.

1 million armed criminals in U.S.

5 million criminals.

Crime costs \$15 million annually.

(Marriage Luke 12:27).

I. TIM. 4:1.3 OCCULTISM, MYSTICISM.

II. THES. 2:3 FAILING AWAY.

vs. 32.34 Fig tree.

Generation.

Coming dictator Anti-Christ.

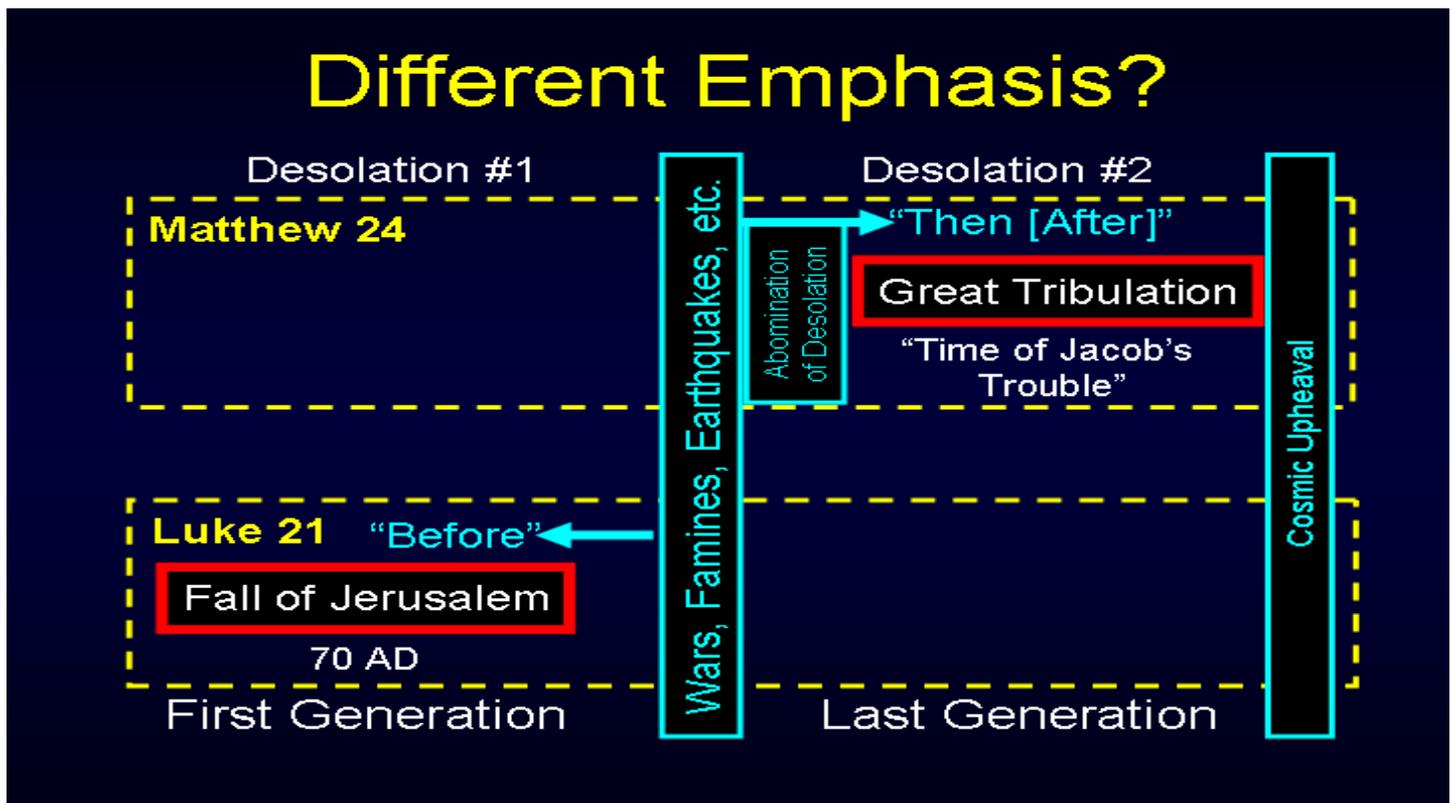
(Divinity of man).

## Matthew Henry Commentary on Matthew 24

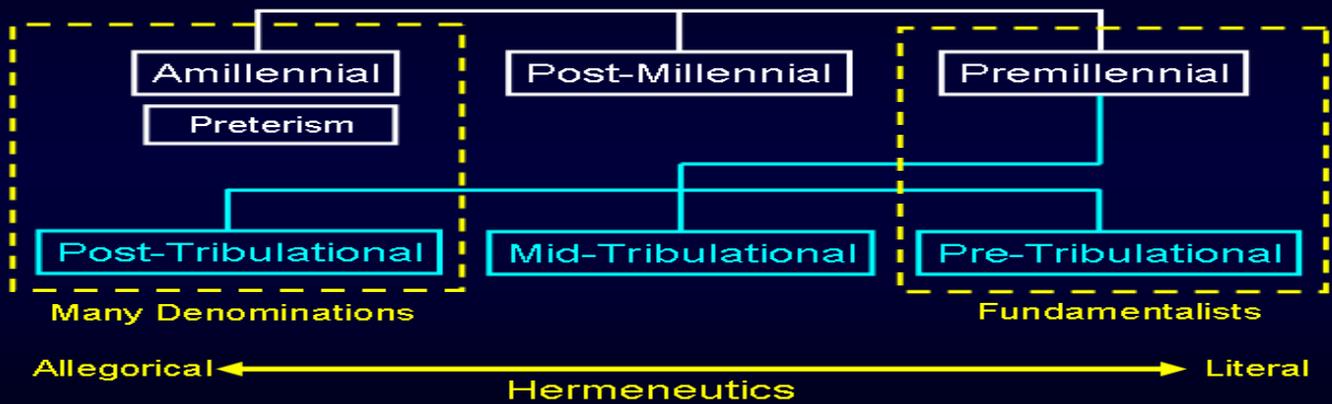
Chapter 24

Christ's preaching was mostly practical; but, in this chapter, we have a prophetic discourse, a prediction of things to come; such however as had a practical tendency, and was intended, not to gratify the curiosity of his disciples, but to guide their consciences and conversations, and it is therefore concluded with a practical application. The church has always had particular prophecies, besides general promises, both for direction and for encouragement to believers; but it is observable, Christ preached this prophetic sermon in the close of his ministry, as the Apocalypse is the last book of the New Testament, and the prophetic books of the Old Testament are placed last, to intimate to us, that we must be well grounded in plain truths and duties, and those must first be well digested, before we dive into those things that are dark and difficult; many run themselves into confusion by beginning their Bible at the wrong end. Now, in this chapter, we have,

- I. The occasion of this discourse (v. 1-3).
- II. The discourse itself, in which we have,
  - 1. The prophecy of divers events, especially referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the utter ruin of the Jewish church and nation, which were not hastening on, and were completed about forty years after; the prefaces to that destruction, the concomitants and consequences of it; yet looking further, to Christ's coming at the end of time, and the consummation of all things, of which that was a type and figure (v. 4-31).
  - 2. The practical application of this prophecy for the awakening and quickening of his disciples to prepare for these great and awful things (v. 32-51).



# Eschatology



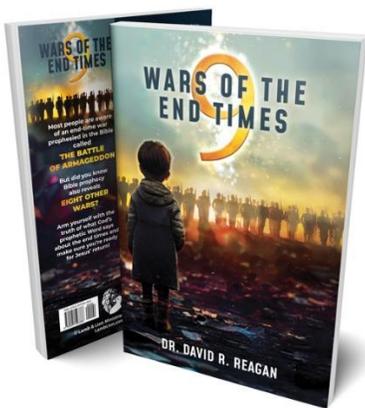
[Home](#) > [Programs](#) > Inquiring Minds... Are We on the Cusp of Armageddon?

Is the world on the cusp of the war of Armageddon? Find out with hosts Tim Moore and Nathan Jones on the television program, Christ in Prophecy!

Air Date: May 24, 2025

Resource

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*9 Wars of the End Times* (Book)



### *The Coming Millennial Kingdom* (Book)

#### Transcript

*Tim Moore:* Hello, again! Welcome to another in our “Inquiring Minds Series.” We’re living in an era when so much of what Jesus spoke about in Matthew 24 seems to be converging right before our eyes.

*Nathan Jones:* Nations are rising against nations, kingdoms against kingdoms, both worldly and spiritual, and there are constant rumors of famines, earthquakes, and other natural disasters, even without global warming or climate change.

*Tim Moore:* But the ever-present threat to humanity is the hostility and violence of mankind itself. From the dawn of time, there have been wars and rumors of wars, but the magnitude and the destructive potential of war has multiplied exponentially in recent years.

*Nathan Jones:* With the incessant hostilities against Israel and the West that are constantly stoked in the Muslim quarter of the Middle East, people contact us here at Lamb & Lion Ministries every time a conflict erupts, and they ask us, “Is this the prelude to the War of Armageddon?”

*Tim Moore:* Our standard answer is, “No.” The Church will not be here when the War of Armageddon breaks out. But that simply leads to another question that we will address today. “Are we on the cusp of the War of Armageddon?”

#### Read More

##### Part 1

*Tim Moore:* So, how about it, Nathan? Are we on the cusp of this war that most people know of as the War of Armageddon? That’s the only one they seem to think about when they look at the End Time Scriptures of Bible prophecy.

*Nathan Jones:* Well, if you look at the Doomsday Clock, which has been around since the 1940s, Einstein put it in, where they have a countdown to the day of the end of the world, just since Donald Trump got reelected, they've moved the Doomsday Clock up to 89 seconds to before midnight, and they're saying we're getting to the end of the world.

Most people, when they think of the end of the world, they just think of Armageddon, this final battle, rather Bruce Willis is going to blow up a meteor up in the sky or... You know, they have all these different ideas. And even Christians believe that, well, Armageddon is the last and final battle. But we know from what the Bible teaches, that Armageddon is one of nine End Time wars leading up into the eternal state.

*Tim Moore:* It sure is. And we're going to talk about those nine wars. Let's get into this passage where Jesus addresses the wars and rumors of wars, and let's point out that in Matthew 24, that phrase actually shows up there in the opening portion of the Scripture where Jesus is responding to the disciples' questions.

In verse three, they ask, "When will these things happen?" talking about the destruction of the Temple. "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" Jesus warns them in response not to be misled because many will come in His name and claim they are the Christ. And then in verse 6 He says, "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. But see that you are not frightened, for these things must take place, and yet that is not the end." And then He goes on to say in verse 7, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."

What is He talking about? Because the nation state as we knew it, or know it today, for the last probably 100 to 150 years did not exist in Jesus' day and age. There were empires. But when He says nation against nation, people against people, what's He talking about?

*Nathan Jones:* You have to go back to the original Greek and the word *ethnos*. In other words, ethnicity. People groups, family groups. You go back to the original families that started separating after Noah's flood and started reforming the families of the Earth. The families became the nations of the Earth. So, it's not just talking about political nations fighting each other, and certainly it is, but it's also talking about racial tensions would ratchet up in the end.

And one of these 10 signs that the Lord gave in that passage, that point to His soon return, is in the context that not only will we have always these 10 signs, war, famine, and all these others, but they will increase in frequency and intensity the closer we

get to the Lord's return. So, we know that we're getting closer to the Lord's return because have there been wars? Absolutely.

*Tim Moore:* Always.

*Nathan Jones:* I was reading that there are only, in all of human history, 289 years without war. War being a thousand or more deaths, certainly we have endless conflicts at all times. But Margaret Drabble, a British writer, said that the 20th century was a beastly century because hundreds of millions of people died in war in the 20th century. And now 25 years in the 21st, it's not looking much better.

*Tim Moore:* No, it's not. And frankly, sometimes the worst wars of the 20th century were fought in parts of the world that were Christian in their orientation, or at least in the historic leanings of Western Europe, the United States. There were even Christians in Japan. People don't realize that during World War II. So, Russia is considered a Christian nation, especially by the Jews because of the Orthodox Christianity.

So, even the Christian world has been steeped in war, but you're exactly right, there's a tribalness to this passage which talks about nation against nation, ethnos against ethnos. And we have seen even in our own country how some want to divide us by ethnicity, by race, and the devil is stoking all of that division because it creates great tension and great destructiveness on the earth.

*Nathan Jones:* You know, the beautiful thing about America is it's an exemplar to the world that it's a melting pot. And yet, we see that to get the Antichrist global kingdom, you can't have America be a successful melting pot anymore. Hence, the constant ratcheting up of ethnic tensions in the world. But, and again, it's leading up into these great End Time wars that the Lord has prophesied.

*Tim Moore:* Well, we're going to get to those. Obviously, folks, when we talk about the War of Armageddon, most people will recognize that that phrase "Armageddon" or "Har Megiddo," the valley around the ancient city of Megiddo, appears in Revelation chapter 16 where the sixth bowls of wrath are being poured out.

And prior to the seventh bowl, it says that there was a, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and the mouth of the beast, a whole hoard of unclean spirits like frogs, and that these spirits motivated the world to gather in a place that in Hebrew is called Har-Megadon. They are gathering for a great battle.

Frankly, it's a battle against the Antichrist, at least that's why the kings of the East are marching and there's a rebellion, but there's an Old Testament prophecy that also points to this tremendous battle. And that's in Joel chapter 3 where Joel says, "Proclaim among the nations," verse nine. "Prepare war, rouse the mighty men. Let all the soldiers draw near. Let them come up." And then in verse 14 it says, "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."

And we know how that battle ends because it says that the Lord comes, He roars from Jerusalem, and just the words of His mouth, just the power of His Word, destroys all those gathered armies.

*Nathan Jones:* It's not really a battle when you think about it.

*Tim Moore:* No.

*Nathan Jones:* We read at the end of Revelation how the Antichrist will gather whoever's left alive, and there's not many by the end of the seven-year Tribulation. And he does this because he wants a civil war to unite all them, anticipating the return of Jesus Christ. When Jesus returns in all His glory and the saints will be following with Him, and Jesus speaks, and the army's melt in front of Him. So, it's not really a battle.

He then moves on to the Valley of Jezreel, like you said, which will fill with blood for 184 miles. That many people die in that valley of decision. The Lord then goes to Jerusalem where another segment of the Antichrist forces has besieged the city.

He will land on the Mount of Olives, it will split in two, a new valley will form, and the Jewish people will escape through that, and Jesus will then defeat the Antichrist and False Prophet and send Satan into a pit. And so it's not really the battle of people. Picture this great nuclear conflagration and so many...

*Tim Moore:* Clash of swords and spear...

*Nathan Jones:* Jesus speaks; they melt. The whole thing takes place in a matter of an hour or two.

*Tim Moore:* It's important to realize, like you said, the Antichrist has gathered his forces against Jerusalem. And while he is fixated and demonically, obviously, he's possessed by Satan, so his hatred and rage against the Jewish people is tremendous.

And in his fixation on destroying the Jewish people, all these other nations that are really kind of tired of his dictatorship, they decide to rise against him and they march toward Israel, the beautiful land. And he hears about their coming, and so he turns his attention to battle them. Where? On this great plane called Har-Magedon, the Jezreel Valley.

As a matter of fact, Napoleon looked out upon that valley and said this is the greatest battlefield on Earth because there are certain entry points, there are certain vantage points. But it is a large open plane, and he envisioned a great battle that could, and we know will take place there.

But in the midst of that attempted civil war, Jesus returns and puts an end to all those folks who actually are in rebellion against Him. They've all taken The Mark of the Beast.

*Nathan Jones:* It's stunning when you go up to the Carmelite Monastery and you look out over the Valley of Jezreel, and you know that one day the largest gathering of human armies in world history will be gathered right there in that valley, and Jesus will break out of the sky and He will defeat them. And it's just... It's not a battle. So, I think we need to help people and the inquiring minds get past the idea that the valley of Armageddon is just giant World War III or something.

*Tim Moore:* Right.

*Nathan Jones:* It's Jesus Christ coming back in victory. He doesn't have to swing a sword. We, the saints, that follow Him aren't... unfortunate, I'd like to get in the fight, too. But, you know, we're not fighting anybody either. Jesus does all the work. It's 100% His victory.

*Tim Moore:* The Lord will fight our battles. I have to point out one other verse here in Joel before we actually get to the nine wars of the End Time. And that is [Joel 3:10](#). The Lord says to those rebelling peoples of the Earth, "Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, 'I am a mighty man.'" And He's calling the rebellious people of the world to gather together so that He can defeat them.

Nathan, I know so many times people take that verse, "Let the weak say I am strong," and they turn it into a very positive. And indeed in the power of God, we can be mighty in His power. But in the context of this verse, that is a haughty boast from those who are inspired to gather together so that they can ultimately be destroyed by the Lord at His return.

*Nathan Jones:* Yeah, well, you've got to remember in the context that this is the end of the seven-year Tribulation. The world has pretty much been divided. Those who have taken the Antichrist loyalty mark, which is a worship act for Satan, they're the ones that are gathering, they're the ones that... They're the worst of the worst of humanity.

And so Satan has this old, tired strategy that if he can just get enough angels, enough people, and he does this throughout history. If I can just get enough together, we'll have the strength to overthrow Jesus. And time and time again, Jesus steps in at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.

We'll get to that a little later, but Satan will be released, he'll lead the children of the Millennial Kingdom saints against Jerusalem. Jesus sends fire down and incinerates him, and that's it. There's never a war... Jesus doesn't have to use a sword because He's got one that comes from His mouth, His Word.

*Tim Moore:* Satan has to be the most frustrated being in all of Creation because every scheme that he forms, the Lord turns it into something for His own good and glory. Even as he saw that Christ was crucified and thought he'd won the ultimate battle, he actually was defeated because that was God's plan all along, and it gave us the privilege of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Well, let's dive into these wars of the End Times. Nathan, you and I believe that the first war, we might be seeing some of the skirmishing right now, and that's what we call the war of extermination. Where does this come from?

*Nathan Jones:* Well, the first war of the nine wars of the End Times would be what we call the Psalm 83 War. It's a prophetic theory of the nine wars, eight of them we're dead sure. This one is a little confusing, but it's a prayer by the seer, Asaph, so we know it's prophetic. And it's an imprecatory prayer calling upon the destruction of the nation's surrounding Israel. That would be Jordan and Syria and Gaza and Egypt and all that.

It could be that over the last few decades as Israel's been subjugating the nations around them, that that's a fulfillment of Psalm 83 or it might be a big surprise and Israel has to subjugate them all and control their land all at once. We don't know. But it answers some of the questions for the next war we'll get into, which is the War of Gog and Magog.

*Tim Moore:* Exactly. One of the keys on this war of Psalm 83, and again, we're seeing that right before our eyes today with attacks from Hezbollah and Lebanon, from the

Palestinians in Jordan and beyond, and the Palestinians over toward Gaza. Of course, Egypt has always been a frenemy even lately.

And so these near end, this inner ring of nations that eventually will be subdued and there will be peace, and that brings us to the setup for the next war, the War of Gog and Magog that we've really been trying to get to today.

But that is when an outer ring of what is today Islamic nations, together with a couple of allies from the north, come in to seize plunder because Israel has kind of let down its guard. It's living in unwallled cities as Scripture describes, and it seems to be at relative peace.

*Nathan Jones:* Yeah, Ezekiel 38 and 39, two whole chapters. We think of Armageddon, there's a lot about... there's not a lot about Armageddon, but we have two whole chapters on Gog and Magog where Russia will lead an Islamic coalition of nations, including Turkey, Iran, most of Northern Africa against Israel in a surprise for the purpose of plundering Israel.

Now, there hasn't been a reason to plunder Israel until the big gas fines. So we know the hook that will drag Russia down, and it's going to be a surprise. And this is a war that's different than the Psalm 83 War, which the IDF wins.

This is God's stepping in and supernaturally destroying this huge hoard of invaders by hail and earthquakes and the armies turn on each other, and the Bible says that the world will then know there is a God. So I think this is a war that's after the Rapture of the Church because God's revealing Himself not through the Church but directly through Israel.

*Tim Moore:* Very good point. And as a matter of fact, we also believe that whenever this war takes place, it is before the Tribulation begins. And a lot of people mistakenly think, "Well, the Tribulation begins at the Rapture." We don't believe that. We believe there will be such chaos in the world that the Antichrist will emerge after the Rapture, not immediately, and eventually he will consolidate his power and sign a peace treaty with Israel.

But when the Lord supernaturally defeats these axis forces against Israel in the War of Gog and Magog, they will collect the weapons of war and use them for fuel for a period of seven years. Well, if they're going to use them

for seven years, then this war essentially has to occur prior to the Tribulation because halfway through the Tribulation, the Jews are under attack and fleeing Israel.

So, we don't know the exact timing, but we believe we have the sequence down. And even today, isn't it amazing how Russia, Turkey, Iran are beginning to align as an axis power, and oftentimes they're turning their animosity against Israel.

*Nathan Jones:* And when you read Ezekiel 38 and 39 and compare it to the Armageddon passages in Revelation 19 and all, it does, the latter years or last days, there are animals that are eating the dead. Israel does acknowledge God. But look at the differences.

The peaceful precondition before the Gog and Magog War can't happen during the Tribulation. The nations and the battles are different. And Armageddon, it's all the nations, not just that Islamic coalition.

The locations are different. Armageddon's in the Valley of Jezreel, while the Gog and Magog takes place on the mountains, the leaders are different, there's different opponents, the accounts of the defeat are different, the nation's protesting doesn't exist at Armageddon, and Israel burning invaders weapons for seven years into the Millennial Kingdom. That doesn't make sense. There are so many differences between Armageddon and Gog and Magog.

*Tim Moore:* Obviously. And, folks, these things can begin to blend together in your minds, so we have a tremendous resource that you can get to help you understand at least the sequence of the wars of the End Times. What is this all about, Nathan?

## **Announcement**

Most people are aware of the End Time war prophesied in the Bible called the Battle of Armageddon. But did you know Bible prophecy also reveals eight other wars? Arm yourself with Dr. David Reagan's book, 9 Wars of the End Times, and read about the truth of what God's prophetic Word says about the End Times. Make sure you're ready for Jesus's soon return. To get your copy of this book, just call the number you see on the screen and ask for it by name or visit our website at [lamblion.com](http://lamblion.com).

## **Part 2**

*Tim Moore:* Well, we hope you will get a copy of 9 Wars of the End Times, and that it will be a great blessing to you. But Nathan, we talked about the Antichrist, and that

brings us to another series of wars, at least two here on the Earth, that I think most people have in their minds. And that's the first that we see in Revelation chapter 6. Which one is this?

*Nathan Jones:* We like to call it the conventional war of the Tribulation. This is really technically World War III, where the Antichrist consolidates his empire, declares war on the world and conquers those nations that don't get in line. When people think of Armageddon, Tim, I think they're thinking about this conventional war. It is basically the next World War.

*Tim Moore:* It really is. And as you said, the Antichrist, people think he's going to rise to power. Well, he's going to be very cunning and sly, and some will gratefully accept his authority, but others will be very reluctant. There are some nations of the world that don't want to be recolonized, quite frankly.

And so the Antichrist will use war, and that's when initially a quarter of the world will be destroyed or killed, and then a third of the world. So 8 billion people in the world today, that means first 2 billion, then another 2 billion killed in some of these wars of the Antichrist consolidating his power.

But we believe that this conventional war will eventually morph into another kind of war that's outlined in Revelation 8 and 9. And that's where people are covered in loathsome sores because, potentially, it could become a nuclear conflagration.

*Nathan Jones:* Well, they're hiding in the caves and asking for the rocks of the mountains to cover them and protect them from the wrath of the Lamb. Where do people go when they have nuclear war drills? Not under your desk like back in the 1950s, but, no, they hide in caves and all.

And so we also see the physical condition of the world after that to be the Earth's ecosystem is pretty trashed. So, yes, this would... These hundreds... Excuse me, tens of thousands of nuclear weapons that have been on standby for the last few decades will eventually be let loose. And while there's war on Earth, then the fifth war, there's a war in Heaven, right?

*Tim Moore:* Yeah, war in Heaven. And frankly, there's a war raging right now, battles all around us in the spiritual realm. We don't see it, but Scripture tells us they're occurring. And quite frankly, sometimes we can feel it. We can feel that we are under attack because Satan is raging about like a roaring lion. But we're told in Revelation chapter 12 that Satan who, mysteriously, still has access to Heaven. Nathan, I don't quite fathom how that's true, but Job tells us...

*Nathan Jones:* To accuse the saints, right?

*Tim Moore:* To accuse the saints. He went before the throne of God to accuse Job. He's still accusing us. But there will be a time when Satan is banished from the heavenly realm and cast out completely. And so this war describes him coming down to earth in great rage. And in his rage, he turns his hatred against the saints. Well, those are Tribulation Saints, and the Jewish people.

*Nathan Jones:* Yes, yes. So, he's kicked out of Heaven. No more access. And, well, now that the Antichrist by the midpoint of the Tribulation will be possessed by Satan, he goes into this great wrath against those who are saved, the Tribulation saints and the Jewish people. And he succeeds in just three and a half years of murdering two thirds of the Jewish people.

Tim, that's 14 million today. About 8 million Jews will die. This is going to be worse than the Holocaust. But the Lord will keep a certain remnant protected likely in Jordan. And there, that remnant will be protected and saved, while the Antichrist goes out and kills all those people.

*Tim Moore:* You know, that is heartbreaking to me. It's bad enough to hear about the quarter and the third of the world's population that are killed. But when you think two thirds of the Jewish people, they have suffered so much. And yet, I have an element of hope even in that number, or that percentage.

As our friend Olivier Melnick said, "The Lord never tells us how many Jews." And so if we are able to share the Gospel and if more and more Jewish people come to their Jewish Messiah, Jesus Christ, and confess faith in Him, then they will be removed from the world when Jesus comes for His Church, because they're part of the Church by profession of faith in Christ.

And so if the number of Jews are dwindled because more and more come to Christ, then there will be fewer people actually killed in that two thirds number. And that is our great hope.

*Nathan Jones:* That is a great hope. We hope that happens. Well, Antichrist is obviously insane with the rage and the nations, the king's underneath them, the 10 kings, begin a civil war, a rebellion against him. And that's where we get to the seventh war, the Middle East campaign of the Antichrist. He goes against the king of the south, likely the king over Africa or at least Egypt. And he goes down, puts down that rebellion. But like you said, they hear the kings

of the East are marching across the dried up Euphrates River and heading to Armageddon, which is exactly what Satan wants.

*Tim Moore:* It really is. So Satan is opposed to Jesus Christ, he's opposed to the people of God, but he wants to receive worship. And so when anybody rebels against him during this day and age, then in his rage, he will turn from the Jewish people and the saints to anyone who would dare rebel against him.

You can think of some of the despots and dictators in the past who have had great anger and rage against those who would dare question their authority. That will be the Antichrist and dwell by the Satan himself. And so this Middle East campaign of the Antichrist morphs into the war of Armageddon we already discussed.

*Nathan Jones:* Which is interesting that Satan, and the Antichrist, and the False Prophet, will release three demons that look like frogs, and they go out and they gather the remnants of world. Now, the world is teetering on the brink of ecological destruction.

So with the wars and the death, that he's able to manage to get all these....so there's a little bit of a time period where Satan's able to get whoever they can, the ragtag remnants of humanity into this one valley in preparation for Jesus to return. Like we said, we went through the Battle of Armageddon. And frankly, it's not really a battle at all.

*Tim Moore:* No, it's not.

*Nathan Jones:* Jesus steps and wins. But people say, "Okay, well that's the final war," but there's one more, right?

*Tim Moore:* There is one more. And, of course, there's an intervening period of a million, or, excuse me, a Millennium Reign of Jesus Christ, a thousand years. Nathan, in your latest book, you talk about that Millennial Kingdom and how much we're anticipating it when peace, righteousness, and justice floods the earth.

But then Satan who is bound during that thousand years is released, and we think, "Why would he be released?" I think the Lord's going to demonstrate that people in their own natural sinful inclination are seeking to rebel.

And so once again, he will lead many on this repopulated earth who have lived in perfect harmony with nature and each other into rebellion, and that will bring about the second battle of Gog and Magog.

*Nathan Jones:* Yes, because it's kind of a reference or... Revelation 20 makes a tip to the Gog-Magog war. It's not the Gog-Magog war. It's like the Gog-Magog war.

*Tim Moore:* Yes.

*Nathan Jones:* Lots of differences between the two of them. But in the end, Satan, as he rallies the children of the Tribulation Saints that were born in the Millennial Kingdom up to Jerusalem, like we said, it's not a battle at all.

*Tim Moore:* No.

*Nathan Jones:* They're raging, they're ready to take it over. But since the Millennial Kingdom is a time without war, there can't be a war. So God just sends down fire and incinerates them, and that's the end of the Millennial Kingdom. And that is the very last war of the End Times.

*Tim Moore:* It is. And sometimes these wars may seem to morph together. We're trying to delineate them, which is why the book that we've offered is such a great resource for you to understand.

I think it's important to realize two things about some of these wars. We mentioned the War of Gog and Magog and what the despots and the kings of the north, in this case, Gog, which we think is up toward Russia and Turkey are looking for, is to seize spoil down in Israel.

I'm reminded of Ahab who looked out upon the vineyard of Naboth and said, "I'd love to have that for myself." And this jealousy and covetousness is what has inspired so many throughout history to long for the possessions of someone else, the wife or husband of someone else, and it leads to grave sin.

*Nathan Jones:* That's why I look so forward to the verse that talks about that we one day will all sit under our vine or under our tree and be at peace with no fear of another person. No war, no ethnos against ethnos anymore. It's like that scene from Lord of the Rings where Frodo is sitting under a tree reading. He doesn't know about all that's going on outside of the Shire.

*Tim Moore:* No.

*Nathan Jones:* I long for that day, Tim, where we could sit down and not worry about getting mugged or shot or some war somewhere, we're truly living at peace, and only the Prince of Peace can provide that.

*Tim Moore:* Only the Prince of Peace. And, you know, we don't have to wait till the War of Armageddon or the War of Gog and Magog. There are people right now who are in rebellion against Jesus Christ, who are shaking their fist at Him, rejecting the offer of salvation, and essentially cursing God. And some would say, "Well, I haven't cursed God."

You know what? If you haven't accepted the offer of salvation, then the wrath of God abides on you, [John 3:36](#) says, "because you are in rebellion against God." Well, folks, we hope that this conversation about the End Times has been a blessing to you and that you are not in rebellion.

## **Closing**

*Tim Moore:* I am reminded when I was a young cadet, I was required to memorize a quote by John Stuart Mill, asserting that war is not the ugliest of things. Mill went on to describe a people whose moral and patriotic sensibility was so decayed that they thought nothing was worth fighting for. As followers of Christ, we can say that an eternity in Hell is uglier and far more horrific than war will ever be.

*Nathan Jones:* We cannot guarantee that war will not descend on our world or touch our own nation or our families. Both Tim and I have sons who are serving in the military, so we speak as fathers when we say that we pray that those we love will never have to experience the devastation of war.

*Tim Moore:* Yet, even as we pray that, we know that Christians in other parts of the world are fighting for their homes, their families, and their lives right now. On behalf of all of us, we long for the true peace that will cover the world when the Prince of Peace reigns from Mount Zion.

*Nathan Jones:* And until He comes, there will be other wars. We may be witnessing the skirmishes leading up to the War of Psalm 83 right now, and the first War of Gog and Magog could break out at any time. In that regard, we're on the cusp of Armageddon, but again, we do not believe that the Church will be here when that infamous war occurs.

*Tim Moore:* More important than discerning the timing and progression of the wars described in Scripture is knowing that your eternal destiny is secure. There is a battle raging for the souls of every man and woman on the planet right now. Those who have put their trust in Jesus Christ are guaranteed to be on the winning side because the Lord has already won the battle.

Don't wait until the fool-hearted rebels of this world convince you to claim, "I am a mighty man," and march to the valley of decision. Make your decision today to join forces with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, for the day of the Lord is indeed near. As the prophet Joel says, "He is a refuge for His people." Until next week, Godspeed!

## Announcement

Most people are aware of the End Time war prophesied in the Bible called the Battle of Armageddon. But did you know Bible prophecy also reveals eight other wars? Arm yourself with Dr. David Reagan's book, *9 Wars of the End Times*, and read about the truth of what God's prophetic Word says about the End Times. Make sure you're ready for Jesus's soon return. To get your copy of this book, just call the number you see on the screen and ask for it by name or visit our website at [lamblion.com](http://lamblion.com).

## End of Program

May 01, 2005 | By [Chuck Missler](#)

# Resolving the Olivet Discourse

## *Epistemology, Part 5*

Author

[Chuck Missler](#)

It is ironic that Jesus' opening imperative in His "Olivet Discourse" is "Take heed that no man deceive you."<sup>1</sup> This is His command, but it begs a question of means: "How do we avoid that?" There seems to be more conjectures and misunderstandings over this passage than almost any other in the New Testament.

The tools to avoid deception derive from a study of epistemology: the study of knowledge — its scope and limits. Our exploration of this passage will challenge more than simply our hermeneutics alone. It will challenge our grasp of the whole eschatological plan in its entirety.

For many students of eschatology — the study of last things — the so-called Olivet Discourse has proven to be a troublesome passage, with many finding it confusing and ostensibly self-contradictory; a hermeneutical battleground between the dispensationalists and the preterists, etc. The preterists insist that this passage — and the Book of Revelation — has been already fulfilled, and much of it is dismissed by them as simply allegorical. Yet even those who embrace a dispensational view have difficulty reconciling many of the Olivet Discourse passages.

## Resolving Power

In optics, the resolving power of a telescope determines its ability to distinguish between two close, but distinct, stars. An apparent single star viewed with a cheap telescope turns out to be a *pair* of distinctly separate stars when viewed with a telescope of better optical quality. This quality is known as the "resolving power" of its optics.

We seem to have an analogous situation here. In this case, we may benefit by setting aside our presumptions and presuppositions and let the several texts speak for themselves.

# A Hazardous Tradition

The traditional “harmonization of the Gospels” is part of the problem. Ever since Augustine, scholars have attempted to meld the four distinct Gospels into a combined narrative. While this can be useful for a cursory review of the life of Christ, it can also result in a myopia of sorts and the Olivet Discourse (recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21) is a salient example.

Since Matthew was skilled in shorthand, we tend to lean on his detailed rendering. And yet there seems to be a substantial disparity between his record and that of Luke’s. Numerous elements appear identical in both accounts, so it has been fashionable — for 1700 years — to assume that they both deal with the same event. Attempts to “harmonize” them have continued to yield a treacherous minefield of confusion.

## Trusting the Texts

It seems that setting aside all of our presuppositions, and simply trusting the integrity of the texts may improve our “resolving power” in addressing these passages.

Jesus called us to respect the details,<sup>2</sup> so let’s take a closer look at each of them. They each may be focusing on different events from a different perspective and maybe even addressing different audiences on different occasions. The similarities of expression in the various accounts may have caused us to jump to premature conjectures, etc.

## The Beginning of Sorrows

Matthew’s account opens with a series of ominous signs:

*For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows [or “birth pangs”].*

— *Matthew 24:5–8*

Luke’s account contains the ostensibly identical series of signs:

*But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.*

— *Luke 21:9–11*

It would seem that these, and many other similarities throughout the respective passages, appear to be a summary of the same teachings by our Lord on the same occasion. (Many scholars note that these specific signs also seem to parallel the same series of signs in the opening of the Seven Seals in Revelation Chapter 6. [See graphic.](#))

Matthew’s account continues, “Then shall” (verses 9, 10, 11, et al.). The bulk of his record deals with events *after* these “sorrows” or birth pangs. He (as well as Mark) further introduces — and emphasizes — an additional sign that is omitted from Luke’s account:

*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)*

— *Matthew 24:15*

This proves to be a major verse for a number of reasons. Here Jesus saves us hours of boring library research by authenticating the authorship of Daniel, and his role as a prophet. Jesus also referred to a key historical event: the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes that had occurred two centuries earlier in 167 B.C.

This historical event was well known to every Jew, and the subsequent rededication of the desecrated Temple is still celebrated every year at Hanukkah. (This is even alluded to in John 10:22.)

The “Abomination of Desolation” refers to Antiochus’ establishing an idol to Zeus in the Holy of Holies that precipitated the Macabbean revolt, which ultimately threw off the Seleucid yoke and ushered in the rule of the Hasmoneans. It is referred to four times in Daniel.<sup>3</sup>

But here, Jesus is indicating that this desecration will happen again and that this time it will usher in a period that Jesus Himself labels “the Great Tribulation” (quoting from Daniel<sup>4</sup> and which Jeremiah called “the time of Jacob’s trouble.”<sup>5</sup>) (Both Matthew’s and Mark’s renderings also include the parenthetical admonition to the reader for understanding!)

## Luke’s Divergence

Luke’s account focuses on a siege of Jerusalem that is substantially divergent from the Matthew account. It is the presumption that they are both dealing with the *same event* that is the source of misunderstandings. Everyone seems to overlook what Luke says after mentioning the famed series of signs:

***But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name’s sake.***

— Luke 21:12

Luke then focuses on a desolation of Jerusalem that *precedes* the series of signs that earmark both passages! Matthew focuses on a desolation that *follows* that same series of signs. Luke’s rendering deals with the fall of Jerusalem that occurred 38 years later in 70 A.D. Matthew all but ignores it.

Luke notes that “this generation shall not pass away until all be fulfilled.”<sup>6</sup> It is interesting that Jerusalem fell 38 years later, the very same duration that it took for that earlier generation to expire during the wanderings in the wilderness.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast, Matthew’s account deals with events that *follow* that same series of signs, including the Abomination of Desolation announced in Matthew 24:15.

(Some try to suggest that this event happened during the siege of 70 A.D., but that is contrary to the substantial eye witness accounts recorded. A war was going on and no idol was so established, “standing in the Holy Place,” etc. In fact, Titus was frustrated by the fire that broke out in the Temple<sup>8</sup> and he later had to command his soldiers to dismantle it “stone by stone” to recover the gold that had melted, etc.<sup>9</sup> This, too, was a fulfillment of our Lord’s prophecy.<sup>10</sup>)

It is important to note the details of the attacks of the Romans in 66–70 A.D. Vespasian and his son, Titus, were sent by Nero to make war with the Jews.<sup>11</sup> However, the death of Nero delayed the siege, and subsequently Vespasian acceded to the throne of the empire and left his son Titus to complete the siege.<sup>12</sup> Luke’s account had warned his listeners:

***And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.***

— Luke 21:20–21

Over 1,100,000 perished in the siege. Those who heeded Jesus’ warning apparently escaped. Some scholars infer that few, if any, Christians perished in the siege.

By contrast, Matthew’s account conspicuously terminates with the Second Coming of Christ and the cosmic upheavals incident thereto, which are alluded to in both accounts.

When we were in school, learning to diagram sentences was useful in understanding grammar: subject, predicate, adverbial phrases, etc. Here, too, a composite diagram may prove helpful ([see graphic](#)).

Matthew's account, written for the Jews, seems destined to be a survival handbook for those enduring the forthcoming unprecedented time.

Luke's, on the other hand, written for the Gentiles, seems to totally ignore the Great Tribulation. In fact, it would seem that his readers shouldn't be concerned:

*And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

— *Luke 21:28*

(The word for “redemption,” *apolutrosis*, appears nine times in the New Testament, and always is used to refer to the redemption of the Body.)

There are numerous complex issues that still emerge from these several accounts. It isn't clear that they even occurred at the same time or place.

Matthew and Mark clearly identify a private briefing on the Mount of Olives to the “insider” group of disciples ([see graphic](#)). Luke, on the other hand, remarks:

*And in the day time he was teaching in the Temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the Temple, for to hear him.*

— *Luke 21:36–38*

Clearly, a side-by-side verse-by-verse study of these passages is essential. To facilitate a more detailed review of these much debated issues, see our briefing package: [This Generation: Resolving The Olivet Discourse](#).

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## Notes:

1. Matthew 24:3; Luke 21:8.
2. Matthew 5:17,18.
3. Daniel 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11.
4. Daniel 12:1. Cf. Daniel 9:27.
5. Jeremiah 30:7.
6. Luke 21:32.
7. Deuteronomy 2:14.
8. Josephus Flavius, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 6, IV 1
9. *Ibid.*, Book 7, I 1ff.
10. Matthew 24:2; Luke 19:44.
11. Josephus Flavius, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 2, XXII 2ff.
12. *Ibid.* Book 4, X 7ff.

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