



CAPITOL COMMISSION

The King's Perfect Prediction: First Signs

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Matthew 24:4-14 *“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. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.’”*

“THE SAVIOR SEEMS TO MERGE THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM IN A.D. 70 WITH A SIMILAR SIEGE THAT WILL OCCUR IN THE LATTER DAYS. IN THE STUDY OF PROPHECY, WE OFTEN SEE THE LORD MOVING ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLY FROM AN EARLY, PARTIAL FULFILLMENT TO A LATER, FINAL FULFILLMENT.”
WILLIAM MACDONALD

Why is there a three-fold emphasis on deception? The reality of war is strong in our passage, is the cause of war laden here as well? What will be the condition of God’s people in the end times? What is the climax of God’s mercy before the fullness of His judgment?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > FEBRUARY 3: MATTHEW 24:15-28 THE KING’S PERFECT PREDICTION: FINAL SIGNS
- > FEBRUARY 10: MATTHEW 24:29-35 THE KING’S PERFECT PREDICTION: THE END

The leaders, representing all of Israel, had passed the point of no return and their destruction was sealed by God Himself! They had refused to recognize His deity on Sunday during the Triumphal Entry because they did not want to submit to His kind rule in their lives. They had showed their willingness to take advantage of the people they represented so flagrantly that Jesus had to stop their theft by cleansing the Temple on Monday. On Tuesday, Jesus had proven that they were not worthy of the authority they possessed and that they lived completely opposite of the entire law they claimed to uphold. Instead of loving the Lord with all their heart, soul, and mind, they were plotting to kill Him, and instead of loving their neighbor as themselves, they were taking advantage of their position and stealing from the people through currency devaluation and inflated costs in the temple. While claiming to be loyal to the Law of God, little did they realize that their hearts, their laws, their policies and their finances revealed that they were in violation of the sum total of all God’s Law. After declaring seven “woes” upon them, Jesus abandoned the Temple with the prophecy, *“There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down”* (Mt. 24:2). The stunned disciples privately request to know the timing of these things, and the sign of His coming and the end of the age as they overlook probably the most sturdy, costly, elegant and historical Temple of their day (Mt. 24:3).

“THE LAND WAS OVERRUN WITH MAGICIANS, SEDUCERS, AND IMPOSTERS, WHO DREW THE PEOPLE AFTER THEM IN MULTITUDES INTO SOLITUDES AND DESERTS, TO SEE THE SIGNS AND MIRACLES WHICH THEY PROMISED TO SHOW BY THE POWER OF GOD.”
JOSEPHUS

I. WARNING AGAINST DECEITFUL CLAIMS MT. 24:4-5

The first word out of Jesus’ mouth in response to their inquiry was an imperative, *“See that you may not let*

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30AM –INTERCESSORY PRAYER – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM
THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM
THURSDAY @ 12:00NOON –BIBLE STUDY – WYTESTONE PLAZA AT 8TH & MAIN 2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

Virginia

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anyone deceive you!" Those deceiving would claim to be anointed with supernatural power and some would even claim that they were "the Anointed, the Christ or the Messiah." Jesus soon repeated the warning again (Mt. 24:23-24). Simon of Samaria fulfilled this prediction in Acts 8:9-10 as well as "Dositheus the Samaritan, who pretended that he was the Christ foretold by Moses," and "Theudas" who promised to divide the river Jordan and "deceived many." Josephus also spoke of the reign of Nero when "impostors of this stamp were so frequent that some were taken and killed almost every day."

"AS YE HAVE HEARD THAT ANTICHRIST SHALL COME, EVEN NOW ARE THERE MANY ANTICHRISTS; WHEREBY WE KNOW THAT IT IS THE LAST TIME." I JOHN 2:18

II. WARNING OF WARS AND DISASTERS MT. 24:6-8

Jesus said that literally "*ye are about to continually hear wars and reports of wars.*" But He then gives two imperatives "*ye see that ye are not terrified.*" The reason is because "*these things are the beginning of birthpains.*" The history of this era prior to the destruction of Jerusalem is filled with increasing strife in Israel, not only against the Romans, Samaritans and Syrians, but also internal strife by robberies, murders, lynchings, death by false accusations, vengeance, tyranny, and often senseless killings. Until, in the siege of Jerusalem, crime is the norm and human life is valueless, resulting in a vicious bloodbath between the Jews themselves while the Romans surrounded the walls and then the carnage multiplies when the soldiers take the God forsaken city.

"THE CONFLICTS WILL INCREASE BOTH IN NUMBER AND INTENSITY AS THE RETURN OF CHRIST APPROACHES, UNTIL THEY EXPLODE INTO A GRAND HOLOCAUST OF BLOODSHED AND CARNAGE." MACARTHUR

III. WARNED OF HATEFUL PERSECUTION MT. 24:9-13

In the midst of such anarchy, the Christians would suffer the most because they will be deliberately persecuted and killed with no place to hide. Not only would there be universal hatred from without, ("*you shall be hated by all nations for my name's sake*"), but also by defection from within. "*And then many will be offended, will betray one another and will hate one another.*" The word for "offended" is where we get our word "scandal." The Christian community is warned about being scandalized by those who outwardly profess to love God and others but prove themselves to be unbelievers by suddenly turning in betrayal and hatred against their own. Undoubtedly this prophecy not only pointed to the initial persecution of Stephen and others by the Jews, but it especially would have included the worldwide persecution in A.D. 64 by Nero as the six hundred miles of catacombs began to be dug for the 174,000 bodies of believers buried under Rome. Even in the face of impending death, the true believer proves his election by persevering faithfully to the end (v. 13).

"IN THE MIDST OF THE CHOSEN ONES THERE WOULD BE FOUND SUCCESSORS OF JUDAS, WHO WOULD BE WILLING TO BETRAY THE DISCIPLES AS HE BETRAYED HIS LORD." CHARLES SPURGEON

IV. THE FINAL WARNING-THE WITNESS MT. 24:14

Even in the midst of the most trying circumstances, and the greatest persecution the priority of the Church will continue and Christ still has His witnesses who will boldly proclaim the good news of His kingdom in the entire inhabited earth and to all the nations. Though it is hard to believe that God would extend his mercy by His people who are suffering so much because of such a depraved society, yet His Gospel will be proclaimed with a universal scope. It is particularly to be accomplished in the design of God to win the leaders who hear the witness of His truth (Mark 13:9-10).

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you careful with the Word of God so that you are not deceived by others?
- 2) Do you remain faithful to God and His Word even when it will cost you something?
- 3) Is the love and mercy of God demonstrated to others by your witness to them?