

# The Church of the Servant King

## Survey of the Bible Series - Matthew (Lesson SB\_MT24B)

### Matthew 24:15-51

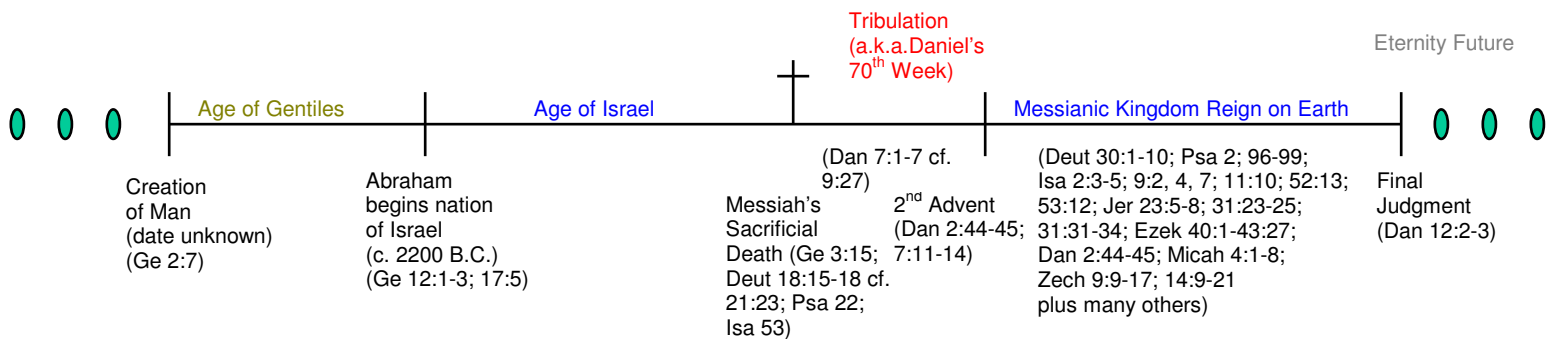
#### Introduction

In our previous lesson, we examined verses 1-14 of this prophetic chapter in Matthew. In that study, we went back to Daniel 9:24-27 to help us understand the perspective that a believer within this period of the Age of Israel would have regarding the future. More specifically, the believer during Jesus' public ministry on earth during the pre-Tribulation, pre-Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week portion of the Age of Israel would not have known anything of the Church Age based upon existing revelation in the Hebrew Scriptures known as the Old Testament. This is why Lewis S. Chafer has termed the Church Age an *intercalation*.

Also, as I mentioned last week, the disciples were evidently puzzled by Jesus' statements that He made in 24:2. They must have pondered what Jesus said while on their short journey through the Kidron Valley between the Temple and the Mount of Olives. Their question in verse 3 ("Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?") reflects their confusion over what Jesus had taught regarding the establishment of the kingdom.

Remember that the gospel that they had been commissioned to preach was the "gospel of the kingdom" as apostles to Israel (Matt 10). The "gospel of the kingdom" was still the gospel with which Jesus was concerned (24:14). So Jesus is still teaching principles regarding the Age of Israel with no teaching relating to the Church having yet occurred. It is against this backdrop that we find ourselves now in verses 15 and following. The time line that these believers during Jesus' public ministry should have possessed would have looked something like the following:

#### The Prophetic Timeline from the Viewpoint of A Believer During Jesus' Public Ministry



## The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)

- The “abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet” refers to the prophecy in Daniel 9:27. In this passage, Daniel prophesies that “the prince who is to come” (v. 26 – the Antichrist) will make a covenant with “the many” (Israel) for “one week” (seven years – see prior study). It is interesting that Daniel’s prophecy has two significant parallels in Jewish history:
  - Antiochus set up an altar to Zeus in the temple in Jerusalem in 167 B.C. (Daniel 11:31) which served as the spark for the Maccabean revolt. In this revolt, the Jews won their freedom from outside tyranny until the Romans invaded in 63 B.C.
  - In A.D. 70, the Roman leader Titus destroyed Jerusalem, burned the temple and set up an idol in it. This parallel event highlights the fact that had Israel responded en masse to the presentation of the gospel of the kingdom during the 1<sup>st</sup> Century A.D., the political forces would have been in place via the Roman empire to fulfill Daniel’s prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27 regarding the last seven years of the Age of Israel.
- Paul prophesied regarding the prophetic Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. Paul does not use the title “Antichrist”; however, his title (“the man of sin”, “son of perdition”) and description (“who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God”) parallels John’s description of the Antichrist of the Tribulation period (1 Jn 2:18; Re 13:14-15).
- Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost presents an excellent (and more detailed) analysis of Matthew 24 and these related passages regarding the Tribulation and the Antichrist in two of his books. See *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, pages 398-406 and *Things to Come*, pages 332-334.
- In Matthew 24:16-22, Jesus describes the dire situation that believers will face during this period in the Tribulation after the Antichrist erects his statue in the temple. Through it all, God’s instructions are designed to insure that a remnant of believing Jews (especially) and Gentiles will “endure to the end” (verse 13) to inhabit and populate the Millennial kingdom of God on earth.
- Jesus promises that those days will be cut short; however this does not mean that the days will not run their course or be decreased in number. He just means that if they were allowed to continue indefinitely without the terminating event of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent, the entire human race would be destroyed. Of course, if God allowed this to occur, Satan would win his arguments in the appeal phase of the trial we know as the Angelic Conflict, i.e. human history. Man’s dominion over the earth would not be restored and a multitude of prophecies that depend upon and will prove the integrity of God’s essence (i.e. sovereignty, veracity, omniscience, justice, righteousness, love, omnipotence, immutability, omnipresence, and eternal life) would remain unfulfilled.
- In verses 23-26, Jesus prophesies that the false Messiah (i.e. the Antichrist) and his prophets will have the ability to perform miracles. This passage should answer the question as to the source of many miracles today when compared with 1 John 4:1, 3 and 2 John 7. In other words, miracles are real, but the discerning believer is encouraged to know their source.
- Another passage that testifies to the deceptive miracles that will occur in the Tribulation is Revelation 13:11-18 in which the “false prophet” of Israel who is aligned with the Antichrist performs miracles to include causing the image of the beast in the Temple in Jerusalem to speak.
- The light of Jesus’ coming will be all the more brilliant since during portions of the latter part of the Tribulation, the sun, moon, and stars will not give their normal light (Matt 24:29; Re 8:12).
- Jesus’ statement in verse 28 is designed to illustrate that His coming will be a time of judgment.

## The Coming of the Son of Man (24:29-31)

- The close of the Tribulation is marked by monumental cosmic disturbances and this fact was prophesied in the Old Testament also. See such passages as Isaiah 13:10; 34:4; Ezekiel 32:7, 8; Joel 2:20, 31; 3:15; Haggai 2:6; and Zechariah 14:6.
- The New Testament contains similar prophecies. See Revelation 6:12-14.
- In verse 31, Christ describes the restoration of the nation Israel back to the land. The entire discourse has been devoted to the prophetic program for Israel, therefore “his elect” refers to Israel, not the Church. God’s elect in the Age of Israel is the believing remnant of Israel. During the Tribulation, the believing remnant is scattered among the Gentile nations and even those who are in Jerusalem at the time of the “abomination of desolation” will flee to Gentile nations for refuge. God will bring the believing remnant back to the land through the instrumentality of angels. This is the final restoration anticipated in Deuteronomy 30:1-8.

#### **The Parable of the Fig Tree (24:32-35)**

- The fig tree is not Israel in this passage. The fig tree is just an analogy for Jesus’ lesson.
- When the fig tree puts on leaves, anyone knows that summer is soon to come.
- In the same way, when these prophecies transpire, the disciples would have known that the Second Advent is at hand.
- The phrase “this generation” has two acceptable explanations:
  - It can mean “race” as in the Jewish race, OR
  - It can mean the generation that sees these prophecies fulfilled.

#### **No One Knows the Day Nor the Hour (24:36-44)**

- Verse 36 is a passage that supports the position that God the Father is the author of the Plan that is executed by the Son and revealed by the Holy Spirit.
- Verses 37-39 document the fact that the normal things in life will continue until the Second Advent; however people will be lulled by indifference into believing that things will always be as they have been.
- In verses 40-41, the two taken are taken in judgment. This is just the opposite of what occurs at the Rapture.
- By analogy, the “master of the house” in verse 43 is Satan who has temporary rulership over the world until the “thief” (Christ) comes.

#### **The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant (24:45-51)**

- The context is Jewish, not Church. Therefore, this passage does not refer to the faithful and unfaithful believer of the Church Age. It refers to the Age of Israel believer and unbeliever.
- The unfaithful Jew (unbeliever manifested by his indifference toward the Second Coming) will be judged at the Second Advent.
- The unbelieving Jew will not participate in the Messianic kingdom on earth and will weep and gnash his teeth in hellfire while missing the glories of the Messianic kingdom on earth and be cast into the Lake of Fire at the Great White Throne Judgment. (See our previous study in Matthew 8 in which we examined different views regarding the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth”).