

THE LAST WEEK OF THE LORD JESUS ON EARTH

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

Jesus Proclaims Truth (Part 21^c) First Watch c. 6:50 P.M.) Wednesday, 12th Nisán (April 1), A.D.33. Lesson: **Signs of the Consummation of the Age** Mt. 24:9-31; Mk. 13:9-23; Lk. 21:10-19.

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

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

When exiting and journeying away from The Temple, most likely through the East or Golden Gate, the disciples approached the face of Jesus to exhibit to Him, the buildings of The Temple which compound included The Sanctuary, surrounded by the Northern Portico, the Western Portico, The Royal Portico on the south, and Solomon's Porch, The Beautiful Golden Gate, and The Sanhedrin.

We then considered The Lord Jesus' response to the disciples' observation and the disciples' silence while meditating as they finished walking up The Mount of Olives.

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

After Jesus located a position on the Mount of Olives directly in the view opposite The Temple, Peter, James, and John approached Him privately and asked Him three questions: When? What is the miraculous-sign of your coming-presence? When shall these things come to pass and what signs for which to look? and What is the miraculous-sign of the consummation of the age? Matthew recorded more information with a fuller explanation than both Mark, a disciple of Peter (1 Pet. 5:13) and Luke, a companion of Paul.

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

In order to clearly and accurately understand these Truths concerning the events that shall take place in the future, it is necessary constantly to keep in mind the progressive Revelation by The God through the centuries and to differentiate between the events relating to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the air for His Church (the Rapture) and all the redeemed regenerated saints on the one hand, and on the other hand His Return back to Earth physically (The Revelation), referred to in Scripture as His Parousia or His coming-presence back to Earth to set up His longed for, and particularly by The Jewish nation, anticipated Kingdom.

As we proceed to examine the teaching by The Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples, keep in mind this: the gospel that John the Baptist and The Lord Jesus proclaimed, **until** The Lord Jesus was rejected by Israel and in turn He rejected Israel (Mt. 10:1-12:30), and **until** John was beheaded, was the Gospel of The Kingdom. But **after** The Lord Jesus introduced The Church that He was beginning to build (Mt. 16:18), He began to clarify the separation of The Church and Israel on The one hand and the gospel of the Kingdom (Millennial) of the Heavens distinct from The Gospel of The Kingdom of The God (Eternal) and the progressive Revelation by The God through the centuries. Since He made this distinction, we are responsible to do the same! Here Matthew records that on the Mount of Olives The Lord Jesus made several distinctions which we do well to observe

(24:3-25:26).

It was noted that The Lord Jesus did not answer the disciples' question directly but rather He cited six occurrences or indications that must occur **before** His parousia (coming presence) to the Earth can take place, thus it is not immediately the end. Some of these occurrences shall also take place before He comes in the air for His Church, also called The Rapture. Therefore His disciples and **we** are constantly to beware that **no one** mislead us! Satan is extremely active and becomes more so as the time draws near. He is masterful at misleading and deceiving humans as he did in the beginning (Gen. 3:1-7). Therefore be vigilant! The six occurrences are:

1. Many false Christs or antichrists who mislead humans shall appear **before** He comes in the air for His disciples (Mt. 24:5; Lk. 21:8).

Many will claim to be Christ while others, false prophets will deceive by setting dates for His appearance in the air. There is only One true Christ and **He** indicated what events must take place first. Remember that He was speaking directly to devoted Jewish disciples before His Crucifixion, Resurrection-ascension and His high priestly ministry in Heaven, and before The Church came into existence at Pentecost by the indwelling Holy Spirit, and thus before The Law was negated. Therefore at this time before the crucifixion there were no Christians, only repentant disciples following The Lord Jesus. He warned, Do not journey after them!

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

Most recently, especially during the last month there has been an increase of these signs, both wars and insurrections, as indications of the rapidity with which the time is approaching the fulfillment of This prophecy that The Lord Jesus gave to His disciples. But we must not be alarmed. These conditions must take place before the redemption of our bodies (Lk. 21:28; Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:20,21), which occurs when He descends in the air to take His Church to Heaven. This event must take place before the seven year Tribulation of Israel begins (Mt. 24:8,9).

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

There are numerous uprisings around the world. Nationals are rebelling against political leaders. Nationals are fighting nationals. Intertribal revolts within nations as well as nations warring against and invading nations. No doubt more of this shall occur as we near the Tribulation period and then again will take place toward the end of the Great Tribulation, ending with the great Battle of Armageddon.

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

On Friday, January 23, 2009 The News Journal, Wilmington, Delaware published an article titled, **2008 disasters set a record for decade in deaths, costs.** "At least 235,816 people lost their lives in 321 disasters around the world last year, said the U.N. International Strategy for Destruction." That calculates to be more than one disaster death in the world every 3.5 seconds. And there was an increase of disasterous earthquakes in the world during the succeeding years. This is another indication of the nearness of His coming in air to take His redeemed saints to Heaven.

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

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

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

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

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

B. Answering the Second Question: What is the miraculous-sign of The Parousia i.e. "Your Coming-Presence"? (Lk. 21:8,9;)

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

In order to clarify the sequence of events that shall take place, it is absolutely necessary to pay close attention to words and phrases referring to time, in this case: 'whenever,' 'first,' 'the end,' 'not yet,' 'come-to-pass,' 'beginning,' 'at-that-time,' and 'until.' These were

underlined in the reference in last week's lesson for ready location.

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

C. Answering the Third Question: Signs of the Consummation of the Age
c. 7:10 P.M. (Mt. 24:9-31; Mk. 13:9-23; Lk. 21:10-19).

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

There are three factors which we shall consider concerning The Tribulation: Beginnings of Birth Pangs, The Length of Time Encompassed, and The Signs to Alert the Nearness of the End.

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

These are the conditions on Earth that shall occur before The Rapture and they alert the saints that 'the appointed time stands drawn near' (Mt. 24:8,9 APT).

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

- a. 'The Tribulation' is the term Scriptures use to indicate the whole seven year period following sometime after The Rapture and beginning when The Man of The Sin makes a seven year covenant of peace with Israel (Dan. 9:27)
- b. The Gospel of The Kingdom shall be once again proclaimed as a herald, but this time to all The World 'in the whole inhabited Globe' (Mt. 24:14 APT).
- c. The second half of three and a half years shall begin whenever the Jews behold the abomination of the desolation stand in The Holy Place (Mt. 24:15 cf. Dan. 11:30,31; 12:11) and shall last for 'a time and times and the dividing of time' (Dan. 7:25; 12:6,7).
- d. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of The Tribulation for Israel as 'appointed Times of ⁰Gentiles' (Lk. 21:24) and referred to by

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

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

- a. The proclamation-as-a-herald of The Gospel of the Kingdom, heralding The Lord Jesus Christ’s Return to set-up His Millennial Kingdom throughout the whole inhabited Globe, shall be resumed after nearly two thousand years. This third factor will alert the Jews that the time of His Second Advent stands near-at-hand.

To grasp the significance of the contrast between The Rapture and The Revelation, it is necessary to keep this in mind. The gospel that John the Baptist and The Lord Jesus proclaimed, **until** The Lord Jesus was rejected by Israel and in turn He rejected Israel (Mt. 10:1-12:30), and **until** John was beheaded, was the Gospel of The Kingdom. But **after** The Lord Jesus introduced The Church that He was beginning to build (Mt. 16:18), He began to clarify the separation of The Church and Israel on The one hand and on the other hand, The Gospel of the Kingdom (Millennial) of the Heavens distinct from The Gospel of The Kingdom of The God (Eternal). Since He made this distinction, we are responsible to do the same! Here in Matthew 24:3-25:26) on the Mount of Olives The Lord Jesus indicated that The Gospel of The Kingdom of God would be replaced, after The Church is raptured, by renewal of the proclamation of the gospel of The Kingdom of The Heavens that John the Baptizer proclaimed, Repent for the millennial Kingdom is near therefore be ready.

However this proclamation is yet future and is preceded by The Rapture, The coming in the air of The Lord Jesus Christ to gather up together the regenerated saints out of their graves first and then those still alive on Earth together to meet in the clouds and then to meet Him in glorified resurrection bodies. Thus both the dead (sleeping) saints and the still living saints shall meet Him together after the dead saints are raised up first (1 Thes. 4:13-17). Shortly thereafter The Tribulation shall begin and the gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven shall be proclaimed throughout the whole globe for seven years. Then additional signs shall begin to take place.

Conclusion: Today we continued to consider The Lord Jesus Christ’s teaching and prophesy upon The Mount of Olives. We reviewed His answers to the first two questions the disciples asked after He sat down upon the Mount of Olives directly in view of The Temple. We considered the necessity to clearly accurately understand the Truths concerning the events that shall take place in the future and to differentiate between the events relating to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the air for His Church or The Rapture and all the redeemed regenerated saints on the one hand, and on the other hand His Return back to Earth physically referred to in Scripture as His Parousia or The Revelation or His coming-presence to Earth to set up His longed for, and particularly by the Jewish nation, His anticipated Kingdom, it is necessary to keep in mind constantly the progressive Revelation by The God through the centuries.

Then we considered His answer to the third question asked by Peter,

James, and John concerning what signs for which to look when the consummation of the age will occur.

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

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

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

Dr. Fred Wittman

For next week: **Read and meditate upon: Jesus’ Final Day of Public Teaching** (First Watch of Night c. 7:00 P.M.): **Answering The Third Question: Signs of the Consummation of the Age** (Mt. 24:27-31; Mk. 13:11-26; Lk. 21:12-28).