

## **Tribulation 1-29-06**

Matthew 24:15-28 (NIV)

<sup>15</sup> "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--  
<sup>16</sup> then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. <sup>18</sup> Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. <sup>19</sup> How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! <sup>20</sup> Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again. <sup>22</sup> If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

<sup>23</sup> At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. <sup>24</sup> For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. <sup>25</sup> See, I have told you ahead of time. <sup>26</sup> "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. <sup>27</sup> For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup> Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

We pick up where we left off last week with Jesus answering the question in Matthew 24:3 (NIV), "When will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" They thought this all would all happen shortly, but Jesus knew there were two different events, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Second Coming. In an amazing way, His answer applies to both. We often see this in prophecy, an intermediate fulfillment and an ultimate fulfillment. I'll try to address both as we go through the passage.

<sup>15</sup> "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--It is interesting that Luke has a different expression in the parallel passage. He writes, <sup>20</sup> "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near." Luke 21:20 (NIV) When Titus entered the Temple, he sacrificed a pig which was the normal Roman sacrifice. If you waited till then to flee, it would have been too late. But if you fled when you first saw Jerusalem begin to be surrounded by armies, the Roman legions, you could have escaped to safety. Christian tradition tells us that the Christian community in Jerusalem followed the advice given by Jesus and was able to escape in 66 A.D. to Pella in Decapolis.

Now let us move to the ultimate fulfillment. Matthew asks us to understand what Jesus meant by the abomination written about in Daniel. To do that we have to go to Daniel 9:24-27. The angel Gabriel told Daniel to consider and understand this. <sup>24</sup> "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. <sup>25</sup> "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild

*Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.*

*<sup>26</sup> After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.*

*<sup>27</sup> He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him". Daniel 9:24-27 (NIV)*

It is better to teach this in a classroom setting with a chalkboard, but let me just run briefly through it for you. Daniel's people are the Jews. God said that seventy sevens were foreordained for the Jews to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. Wow! For the Jew, and for the believing Christian there could not be anything more exciting. The end of sin and its destructiveness is what we long for. Everlasting righteousness is heaven. It does not get any better than that. So when will this happen? God broke it down into parts, seven sevens and sixty-two sevens. The street and trench will be built in a time of trouble. We can read about that in Nehemiah. (Nehemiah 2:5) From the king's edict to rebuild Jerusalem it took 49 years, the seven sevens. Then another 62 sevens or 434 years until the anointed One was cut off, crucified. (Isaiah 53:8) Then the people of the ruler who would come destroyed the city and the sanctuary. (Luke 19:43-44) The Roman army that destroyed the Temple consisted of people of the ruler that will come. Just as you are the people of God, they are the people of another ruler.

This is amazing detail. I think this prophecy is what led the Magi to watch for the sign in the heavens (Matthew 2:1-2), because Daniel was a respected captive in the East when he wrote down these prophecies. It tells of how long it would take to rebuild Jerusalem, and then the period of time until the Messiah, followed by the destruction of Jerusalem. I believe Jesus predicted the destruction of the Temple based on verse 26 of this passage. He knew He was about to be cut off. He knew His death would put an end to sin for all those who placed their trust in Him. His blood would be the atonement for wickedness. (Matthew 26:28) Why the students of the Tenach (Old Testament) could not see this is a mystery.

But there is one week left. It took 7 to rebuild, 62 to the Messiah. That is a total of 69. The prophecy began with 70 weeks. The fact that times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24) would come in between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week was not understood in that generation. (Acts 28:28) Daniel said that before that seventieth week came there would be wars all the way to the end. Isn't that what Jesus said in our passage for last week?

Daniel then went into the details of the last week, the last seven years, in verse 27. He (the ruler that will come) confirms a covenant with many for seven years. Titus had no such covenant. This cannot be about him. This is a world ruler described in 1 John as the Antichrist. (1 John 2:8) In the middle of that seven-year agreement, he stops the sacrifice and offerings and sets up an abomination in a wing of the Temple.

**Commented [notes1]:** 5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it." Nehemiah 2:5 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.[ Isaiah 53:8 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** 43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. 44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you." Luke 19:43-44 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** 1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." Matthew 2:1-2 (NIV)

**Commented [notes5]:** 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Matthew 26:28 (NIV)

**Commented [notes6]:** 24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Luke 21:24 (NIV)

**Commented [notes7]:** 28 "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"[ Acts 28:28 (NIV)

**Commented [notes8]:** 18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 1 John 2:18 (NIV)

(Revelation 12:14) That means the Temple must be rebuilt again before this takes place. This abomination stands in the temple and causes desolation. It may be the image of the beast that can talk, the one John described in Revelation 13. (Revelation 13:14-15) The end that is determined is poured out on him.

**Commented [notes9]:** 14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. Revelation 12:14 (NIV)

In that passage in Daniel, you have the rebuilding of the Temple, the cutting off of the Messiah, the destruction of the Temple, all of which have taken place. Then in the future there is the final seven-year agreement, the ruler stopping the sacrifice in the middle of those seven years, and setting up an abomination that causes desolation, and thankfully the end that is decreed for the Antichrist. That is a lot of detail for 4 verses. We have seen it all come to pass except for the last seven. So when Matthew asks the reader to understand what Jesus was referring to, I trust you now understand as much as we can at this point in history.

**Commented [notes10]:** 14 Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

15 He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. Revelation 13:14-15 (NIV)

<sup>16</sup> then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. <sup>18</sup> Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. In the seventieth week, the ultimate fulfillment, those who live in Judea should do the same as the Christians who read Luke's gospel in 66 A.D. There is urgency about this. As soon as they hear about it they are to flee immediately. (Luke 17:32-33) The Luke account wrote that Jesus said to remember Lot's wife. One hesitating moment resulted in her death.

**Commented [notes11]:** 32 Remember Lot's wife! 33 Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve Luke 17:32-33 (NIV)

<sup>19</sup> How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! <sup>20</sup> Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. You have to run for your life though unprepared. The Antichrist must be planning an all out slaughter on those who believe to take place as soon as he sets up that abomination. (Revelation 13:7) Pray for the best possible conditions for your escape. Jesus is emphasizing how immediately believers must escape.

**Commented [notes12]:** 7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. Revelation 13:7 (NIV)

<sup>21</sup> For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again. That will be the beginning of the most horrific time the world has seen. The fall of Jerusalem was surely an ugly time in human history. Josephus described the slaughter of over a million Jews in Jerusalem in similar terms, though we know the end of days will be even more severe. Zechariah predicts that 2 out of 3 Jews will die in that day. (Zechariah 13:8-9) When man gains unchecked power over people, he becomes a monster. Lenin, Hitler, Amin, Saddam, they were just a taste of what will come from the Antichrist. Indwelt by Satan, he will make war with the saints. He will fight everything that is godly with ferocity that we have never seen. There will be no limits he will hesitate to cross, no bounds of mercy or decency that he will heed. (Revelation 12:12)

**Commented [notes13]:** 8 In the whole land," declares the LORD, "two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. 9 This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.'" Zechariah 13:8-9 (NIV)

<sup>22</sup> If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. At this point in time, there are only three and a half years left for mankind. (Revelation 13:5) I do not know what it means by the days being shortened. Perhaps it means that if God did not set a point in time in which He would intervene, then the Antichrist would end all life on earth. Some believe that the daylight hours will be shortened to assist the believers in hiding.

**Commented [notes14]:** 12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short." Revelation 12:12 (NIV)

**Commented [notes15]:** 5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. Revelation 13:5 (NIV)

There is always a remnant of believers. (2 Kings 19:31) Most fundamentalists believe that these are born again believers who came to Christ in the tribulation. Others believe that this is a group of Jewish converts that have accepted Jesus as Messiah. Others that Christians have not yet been raptured. We all have opinions. It is important that we do not let a point of prophecy divide us. Whoever these are, it seems to me that they are the ones referred to in last week's portion of Scripture that will be saved from the hatred of the world if they can hang on through those last three and a half years. (Matthew 24:13) It would certainly be an exciting time to be alive, but I do not think any of us wants to experience the horror of those days.

**Commented [notes16]:** 31 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this. 2 Kings 19:31 (KJV)

**Commented [notes17]:** 13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. Matthew 24:13 (NIV)

<sup>23</sup> At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. <sup>24</sup> For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. Jesus again emphasizes that there will be those who claim to be anointed ones. He goes even further in these verses to add that they will perform great signs and miracles. The trickery in the world today has been exposed by illusionists like Houdini and in our day, Andre Cole. False Christs in our age are just tricksters. In this time that Jesus is referring to, they will actually perform miracles. (Revelation 13:14) They will show great signs. The world is hungry for spiritual manifestations. For those who focus on that over the word of God, this will be powerful delusion. Even those chosen by God would be deceived--if that were possible. (2 Thessalonians 2:11)

**Commented [notes18]:** 13 And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Revelation 13:13 (NIV)

**Commented [notes19]:** 11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 2 Thessalonians 2:11 (NIV)

Genuine called of God believers may be tricked for a time, but the discernment of the Holy Spirit will expose these evil people for who they really are. Jesus did not perform signs when asked. (John 6:30) He obeyed God. In fact, He refused to give signs when asked to verify that He was of God. These false prophets will be glad to display miracles to get you to follow them.

**Commented [notes20]:** 30 So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?" John 6:30 (NIV)

If I understand 2 Thessalonians 2:7 correctly, it appears that the restraining power of the Holy Spirit will be lifted and evil will go unchecked. We do not realize in our world today how much evil is restrained by the Spirit of God. We think it is bad now, but you have not seen anything compared to what will happen in that day.

**Commented [notes21]:** 7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. 2 Thessalonians 2:7 (NIV)

<sup>25</sup> See, I have told you ahead of time. <sup>26</sup> "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. Jesus tells us again in no uncertain terms. Repetition in the Bible is an emphasis of importance. Many have been and will be led away by those claiming a special anointing, which is what the word Christ means. In chapter 23, Jesus warned us not to look up to someone even as teacher, or father, or master because there is only One, and we are all brothers. (Matthew 23:8) Even in the church we have an overemphasis on certain teachers. I like Ravi Zaccarius. Someone else loves Swindal. Another is crazy about Standley. They are our brothers. Get in the word for yourself. You can learn a lot from these gifted men, but they are not the final say. Go to the word yourself and form your opinions. Let the Holy Spirit teach you through them and even warn you when they are off track. (Philippians 1:9-10) They would be the first to tell you not to think that they are the only ones that have the pure word of God. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer, and it does not get any

**Commented [notes22]:** 8 "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. Matthew 23:8 (NIV)

**Commented [WB23]:** 9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, Philippians 1:9-10 (NIV)

more special than that. Why would you chase after some man when the Spirit of God resides in you? (John 14:26)

<sup>27</sup> *For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.* He is not going to come in some secret way for only a favored few. Every eye shall see Him. You will not have to wonder, you will know. The world will know. What a day that will be! Daniel described is as a rock that came out of the mountain of God, hurled to the earth, crushing all the governments of man. (Daniel 2:44) When the world sees Jesus in His glory, there will be no question who He is. We will have more on that next week.

The disciples were asking what will be the sign of His coming. How will He reveal Himself? The unveiled glory of Jesus will strike the heart and mind of every believer with overwhelming love, and at the same time strike every irrevocably hardened heart with untold dread.

<sup>28</sup> *Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.* The partial fulfillment in 70 A.D. may have been the carcass of the Jewish nation as the eagles on the standards of the Romans came in to devour what was left. The ultimate fulfillment may be that of Jesus coming with the saints to the carcass of the world system to establish the Kingdom of God. The prophecies tell of the birds gathering to eat the flesh of the fallen at Armageddon. (Revelation 19:17-18)

I see it in light of the previous verse. I see the carcass as Jesus' body that was dead but is now alive. He said that unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood there is no life in us. (John 6:53) Jesus is saying that those who feast upon Him, the living Word, will be with Him. He returns with innumerable saints from throughout the ages. We will rule and reign with Him. Are you devouring the living Word? Are you a vulture for the world of God? Never thought of myself as a vulture before. Did you? Jesus said, *"For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink."* John 6:55 (NIV) We crave the Word of God and so we are with Him. (Matthew 12:30) *"See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones..."* Jude 1:14 (NIV) Will you be with Him in that day? Do you crave the living Word?

As fascinating as all these details are, we come back to what matters today, this minute. Am I in Jesus? Do I know Him as my savior? Am I living in communion with Him? As surely as the first verses of Daniel's prophecy came to pass in detail, the last ones will as well. Have I allowed Him to make an end of my sins? Has He atoned for my wickedness? Earlier in Jesus' answer He told us not to be fearful. (Matthew 24:6) How can you not be fearful when faced with such a dreadful scenario? You can only be free of fear if you are living in the One who is the Shepherd of the sheep. Are you His? Are you ready for the things that will come? Even if these events are 100 years in the future, life is full of tribulation. (Job 14:1) The only way to be prepared is to be in the hands of the One who holds the future as well. Is that how you would describe your life today, in the hands of God, or in your own incapable hands? Come to Jesus! Let Him give you a hunger for His word. Let Him transform your life and free you from fear.

**Commented [notes24]:** 26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 14:26 (NIV)

**Commented [notes25]:** 44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

Daniel 2:44 (NIV)

**Commented [notes26]:** 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, 18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."

Revelation 19:17-18 (NIV)

**Commented [notes27]:** 53 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

John 6:53 (NIV)

**Commented [notes28]:** 30 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

Matthew 12:30 (NIV)

**Commented [notes29]:** 6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.

Matthew 24:6 (NIV)

**Commented [notes30]:** 1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

Job 14:1 (KJV)