

**The Beginning of Sorrows
Matt 24v1-14**

Overview

- 1. The test of a prophet (Deut 18:18-19)**
- 2. The Signs of the End Times: The Beginning of Sorrows**
- 3. The Great Tribulation**
- 4. The Rapture**
- 5. The Millennial Kingdom**

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

24:1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. 2 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." 3 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?"

- 6. Three questions:**
 - a. When will the temple be destroyed? What will be the sign of your coming, and when will be the "End of the Age".**
- 7. Last week we talked about the destruction of Jerusalem...**

Luke 21:20-24

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

- a. That was a prophetic milestone, and from that event forward Gentiles have ruled over Jerusalem.**
 - b. This even was the start of the period that Jesus described as "the times of the Gentiles"**
- 8. But in June of 1967, another prophetic milestone occurred: The Six day War.**
 - a. I won't go into a long history lesson, but the Readers Digest version is that leading up to that date the surrounding Arab nations were making provocative moves against Israel, the final**

straw being the massing by Egypt of 1000 tanks and 100,000 soldiers on the Jewish border.

- b. Israel launched a pre-emptive strike, and the conflict immediately involved Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The Arab states of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria also contributed troops and arms.
 - c. At the war's end, in the course of six days, Israel had gained control of the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and ...East Jerusalem.
 - d. So it would seem that this event, when Jerusalem came back under control of Israel, signaled the end of the "times of the Gentiles", and ushered us into a new time... "The Beginning of Sorrows."
9. Then – "The End of the Age" From a biblical perspective, when we say "end of the age" we are speaking about the end of the Tribulation, battle of Armageddon, (Dan 9, Rev 11).
- a. At the end of that time will be the "end of the age", which is when the Lord will return and establish His kingdom (Chart)
 - b. Jesus promised them and us:

Matt 28:18-20

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

10. The prophecies that we are about to look at, six signs, are the things that will begin to warn us that the end of the age is near...
- a. They are what Jesus calls birthpangs, like labor pains come before a baby is born.

Sign #1 - Widespread Deception

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.
5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

2 Cor 11:13-15

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

11. Paul is talking about posers – men that pose as apostles of Christ, but in fact are deceivers.

- a. They will look like Christian leaders, act like Christian leaders, but in fact they are ministers of Satan – being led by and influenced by Satan.**

1 John 2:22

Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

12. It will get worse in the tribulation

2 Thess 2:7-12

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

- a. When the Holy Spirit is removed by the widespread removal of all Christians, man will finally be free to do what he wants.**
- b. Today the people of faith stand as a bulwark against society devolving into “do what you want” world.**
- c. If you remove Christians from this world, who will there be to say that sexual perversion is wrong, or killing babies is wrong?**

Sign #2 - Political and Military Conflict

6 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. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

13. This is not world-wide war, but many skirmishes, many disagreements.

- a. More wars in 20th century than all history combined,**
- b. Iran, Pakistan, Africa, The Israel-arab issue: The world, especially in the Mid-east, is boiling over**
- c. ...that should be a billboard to those who know their bible – Jesus is coming!**

14. Fact of the matter is we know very little of what really is happening in the world.

- a. If we knew all that was happening, or being planned, we would be freaked out!**

15. "See that you are not troubled... not yet!" – don't worry, read the back of the book, WE WIN!

Sign #3 – Calamity in the world

And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

16. Famine – this is an economic crisis, which brings on food shortages.

- a. This is not world-wide, that will happen in tribulation;**

Rev 6:5-6

When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

- b. But what are we seeing now?**

17. Pestilences – we live in a fairly secure place, we think that our medical system can pretty much take care of anything.

- a. But look over the 20th century, again more widespread pandemics that any other time in history.**
- b. But add to that – we are seeing something interesting: Because of the widespread use of antibiotics, we are now finding that bacteria are mutating at a more rapid rate that are resistant to antibiotics.**
- c. Again this is not worldwide, because this is a SIGN – a birth pang. It will get worse in the tribulation**

Rev 16:2, 11

So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

...They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

18. Earthquakes: need I even talk about this? Haiti? Chile?

- a. 29 earthquakes in one month -**
- b. Again – birthpangs... the real earthquakes will come later:**

Rev 6:12-17

I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Rev 16:17-18

Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.

Sign #4 – Change in emotions towards Gods people and Israel

9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

19. FACT: more Christians, 45 million, or two-thirds of all Christian martyrs, died in the twentieth century.

a. These estimates are contained in *The New Persecuted: Inquiries into Anti-Christian Intolerance in the New Century of Martyrs*

20. There was a time in America where you would be considered strange if you weren't a Christian, it was abnormal to not believe in God.

a. Yet in spite of the fact that a majority of Americans call themselves Christian, those who actually try to live out their faith are considered "fanatics".

b. If you actually believe what the bible says and live it, you are a "right-wing zealot", a "hate-monger".

c. True Christians are being marginalized, pushed out of schools and government.

21. Offended – betray one another: I cant help but see in our growing culture of political correctness that any word that calls out sin is now considered "offensive".

a. Some European countries have already enacted laws that outlaw speaking out against certain sins, calling it 'hate speech'.

22. Again this is only a "birth-pang", things will get much worse in the tribulation.

Rev 6:9-10

When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

Sign #5 - Religious counterfeits will have great influence

11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

23. There are so many that are called men of faith today, but actually they are men of political and social motivations.

- a. They preach messages of social justice, or feel-good emotionalism, think positive and good things happen.
- b. Watering down the gospel – I have to be blunt, I watched Larry King interview Joel Olstien, and Larry teed up the gospel for him, and Joel would not say the words! (look for clip?)
- c. Churches that emulate the computer company Apple rather than the NT church model of the bible.

1 Tim 4:1-2

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, the truth.

- d. conscience seared – at one time they were bothered by what they were doing, but now they have no problem at all...

2 Tim 3:13

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

- e. Not only deceiving, but being deceived – they believe their own lies.

2 Peter 2:1

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

Sign #6 – Lawlessness & Apathy

12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of (the) many will grow cold.

24. Breaking the law! What law? God's law!

- a. **Does not matter what law man makes. We think if we make abortion legal, its OK. If two consenting adults participate in sexual relations, it's fine.**

2 Tim 3:1-5

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power.

25. There is a sense that Jesus is not talking about the unbelievers who are living like the world...

- a. **I believe He is painting a picture of a world that has become so sensual that many Christians will grow cold in their faith and join in.**
- b. **The love of "the many", referring to the majority.**
- c. **In other words, Spiritual complacency – the majority of people who profess to be Christians are NOT. False believers!**

Matt 7:21-23

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"

- d. **One the one hand we as Christians shouldn't walk around worrying whether Jesus will know us, but there is a healthy think called "self examination"**

2 Cor 13:5

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.

26. Wow – that is some heavy stuff! Now I don't want you guys to get all upset, or get paranoid, for two reasons:

- a. **#1 – these are signs. The end is not here, but it's near!**
 - i. **Don't go run up your credit cards!**
- b. **#2 – God protects his people!**

The Promise for the Saints

13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 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.

27. Jesus is not saying “If you can last through the tribulation, somehow you live through it, then you’ll be saved.

- a. **No, He is talking about the perseverance of the saints: Staying in the faith**
- b. **Here is the thing - Staying in the faith is evidence of your salvation.**
- c. **It’s not being perfect, or being more holy than the other guy, or sinning less.**
- d. **It is remaining! No matter what comes, we will never turn our back on the gospel!**

1 John 5:4-5

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world -- our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

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Rom 2:5-11

...who "will render to each one according to his deeds": eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness -- indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.

Rom 8:24-25

For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance (endures).